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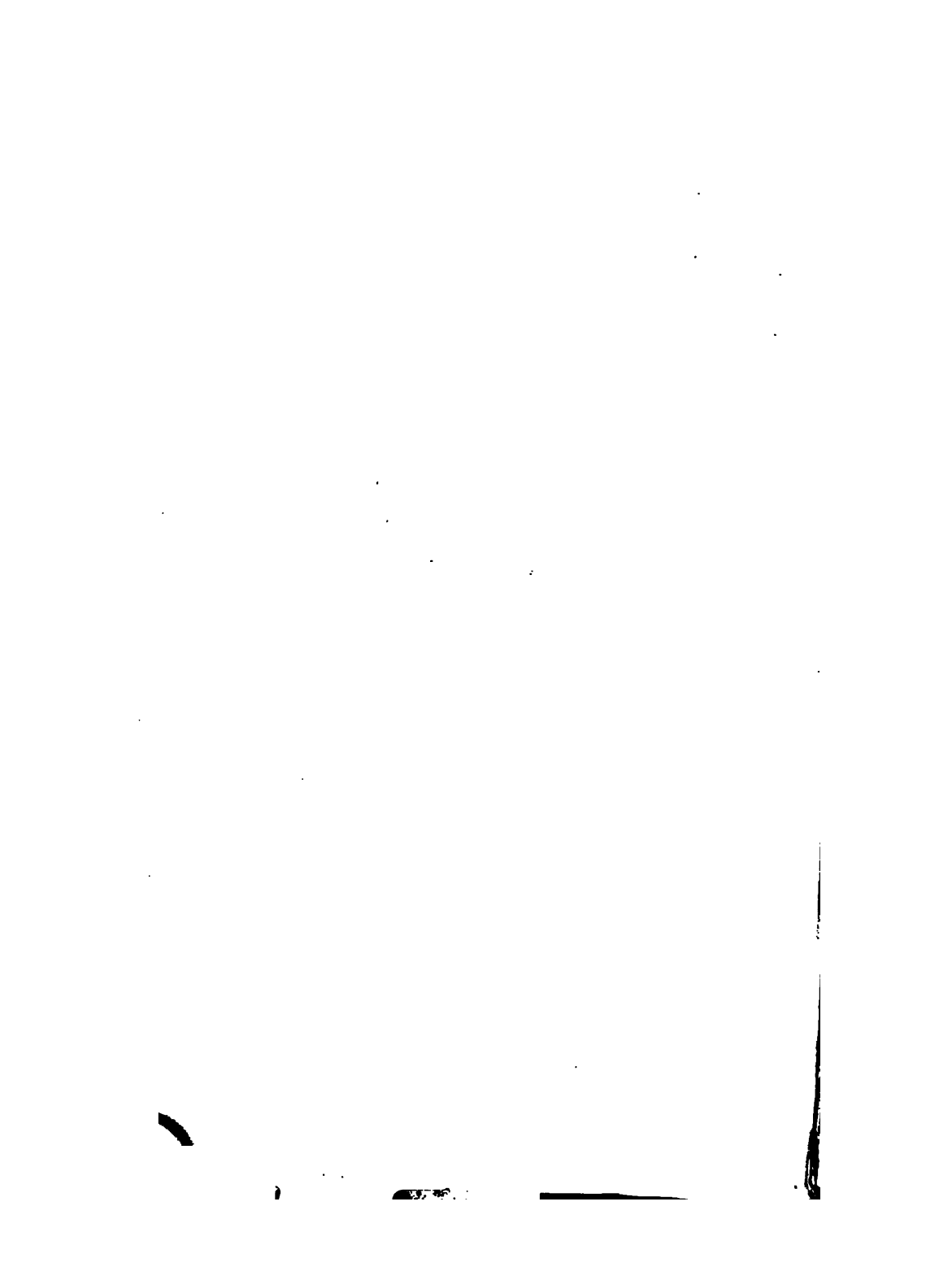
BY
Elizabeth Vigoureux,
(IMHAUS.)

THE GORDON LESTER FORD
COLLECTION
FROM EMILY E. F. SKEEL
IN MEMORY OF
ROSWELL SKEEL, JR.
AND THEIR FOUR PARENTS

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MADELEINE DE VALLERICE.

"The struggle be a lesson bright to learn ;
And thy life but a peaceful book to close."

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A STORY OF THE HEART

ELIZABETH VIGOUREUX IMHAUS

DEDICATED TO MY BELOVED PARENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
AUG. WILL



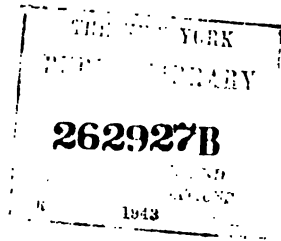
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NOTE.

**This Story is a novelization of the Celebrated Play of the same title,
written in collaboration with Louis A. Imhaus.**

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

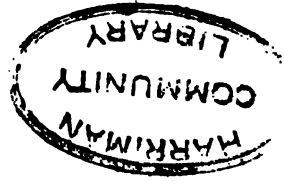
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CHAPTER I.

MADELEINE DE VALLERICE.

ABOUT ten o'clock in the morning of the day our story opens, a young woman awoke, yawned for a moment or two, arose from her bed, rang for her maid, and, after donning a pale blue *peignoir* over her thin white silk *robe de nuit*, passed into her dressing room.

This was one of a suite of apartments on the second floor of a house on the Boulevard Malesherbes, near the Madeleine, Paris. It was also one of the most spacious, and might have been taken for a *salon* had not its furniture plainly indicated the purpose it served. An immense marble-topped toilet table, with numerous utensils, all of silver, marked with the initials M. de V., occupied one of the panels in the wall opposite the chimney. Near the window were two other tables, the first covered with all sorts of necessary articles in Russia leather cases, the second hidden beneath a cloud of

white muslin, and loaded with a large variety of shell combs and brushes with gilded monograms and initials. An easy chair,—a Louis XV. *bonheur-du-jour* resting upon a Turkish rug, a very large Psyche mirror, in which one could see oneself from head to foot, and two low chairs of gilded bamboo, completed the furniture. This pretty retreat was daintily perfumed and lined throughout with pale blue Chinese satin, showing refinement and delicacy of taste. But none would think of going into raptures over the comfort, luxury and artistic adornments of the apartment, when its mistress took possession of her domain.

She was a woman of twenty-five years, tall, in all the perfection of sculptured beauty. Several journalists, charmed by this beautiful creature, when she appeared for the first time upon the stage, and took the public by storm by her genius and talent, described her after this fashion:—"Broad and well-developed shoulders, a superb, yet firm bust; a very slender waist rising from full and voluptuously formed hips; arms, hands and feet of exquisite shape; the head of a goddess, faultless in contour, with a peculiar expression, a trifle stern perhaps, yet at times sad, making it even more captivating;—large dark brown or hazel eyes that at night looked black, the lids inclined to be a little drooping or dreamy, but

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at times full of flashing fire; long black eye-lashes and beautifully arched black eyebrows; an aquiline nose, small mouth, with full red lips which (when she smiled) displayed teeth of pearly whiteness and of perfect shape. To animate this charming combination and illumine it with perpetual sunshine, hair of a warm yellow blonde tint, silky and abundant.

Such is Madeleine de Vallerice. She was entirely unknown two years previous, when she made her appearance on the stage in Paris, and gained favor at once with press and public, and was now one of the most sought after of Parisian beauties.

Madeleine seated herself upon one of the low chairs before the hearth, upon which there was a bright fire, and held her little daintily slippered feet to the blaze.

A trim maid entered, bearing a silver tray, upon which was a breakfast consisting of buttered toast, and a small silver coffee urn, from which the fragrance issued.

After bidding a pleasant and gracious good-morning to the maid, she partook of the repast, then resigned herself to her waiting woman, who combed her tresses, which strayed in short soft curls over her smooth white forehead, and fell, when unloosed, covering her shoulders and back like a cloak of gold.

She seemed in a joyous mood, though apparently not entirely free from care, for an anxious look at times flitted over her classical features, but was as soon cast aside. In her careless attitude, half sitting, half reclining, her face illumined with a smile, with a dreamy, half-opened expression in her eyes, she strongly reminded one of the favorite sultanas, who have only to live, and whose every wish is granted.

The maid seemed perfectly contented with her task. It was very evident she loved her fair mistress, and her only desire was to please her.

"Mademoiselle feels well this morning?" she ventured to ask.

"Yes, thank you, Suzanne, you are, as usual, very anxious about my health."

"But my dear mistress works hard night after night, and then your days, instead of taking rest, are spent in visiting what you call your sick children."

"My dear Suzanne, I do not forget that I was once a child, very poor, sometimes ill and very miserable. These poor children cause me great joy, for I can now minister to their wants and relieve their suffering."

"Mademoiselle is so good."

Here the maid was interrupted by Madeleine. "Go, see if there is anything for me in the ante-chamber; I heard the bell just now."

The maid went out. A moment later she re-entered the dressing room and handed her mistress a bouquet of roses and a small, neat white envelope.

She took the flowers with the delight of a child, her eyes sparkling.

"Did this note come with the flowers, Suzanne?" she said, turning the letter in her hands and casting a sidelong glance at the maid, who was preparing some articles for her mistress' use.

"Yes, Mademoiselle," replied the maid, still continuing with her work. Madeleine placed the flowers in a tall silver pitcher; then, repairing to a distant part of the room, broke the seal and drew forth a small sheet of paper, covered with apparently meaningless characters, but what in reality is known as a cipher key—a sort of alphabet that enables one to read a secret dispatch, and which, falling into other hands than for whom it was intended, would mean nothing.

Holding up the mysterious paper, she deciphered the following:

"It is absolutely necessary that I see you as soon as possible. You will find me waiting for you at twelve o'clock to-night, you know where. Take the greatest precaution—understand, the greatest. See that this is absolutely reduced to ashes as soon as you have read it."

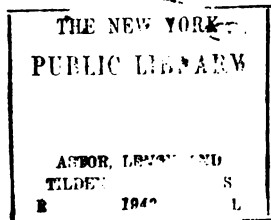
Not a muscle of her face quivered during this reading. She was evidently accustomed to epistles of this kind. Seeing that the maid had absented herself from the room, she went to the fireplace and threw it into the flames, watching it until it was consumed ; then taking the tongs, stirred the ashes, to make sure it was entirely destroyed. This done, she seated herself in a large easychair and gave her thoughts full play. The joyous mood and expression we have before noted passed entirely from her countenance, and one watching that usually calm face could read a volume of varied emotion. Her thoughts at times formed themselves into words, and she muttered :

“Why is this mystery imposed upon me? I have nothing to conceal.” Here she checked herself, as if a sudden thought came, and one could tell by the blush that suffused her fair face, that a secret was there, which she scarcely dared admit, even to herself. Why should she not indulge in thoughts of him? Was he not grand and noble? Even if he was opposed to her in a suit for thousands, could she blame him for working in the interest of his client?”

She was courted and admired by rich and titled, but she turned a deaf ear to their pleadings. Her heart was closed, perhaps by the bitter poverty she had endured and the rebuffs



"She threw the letter into the flames."



too often given to an almost nameless child. She was embittered and hardened, her only thought, her only ambition was to excel in her chosen profession and amass the wealth which success wins.

Still her success did not change her nature, she was charitable to a fault and never turned away from those who appealed to her—for had she not suffered? Yes, starvation!

She had met Maurice de La Tour and her thoughts were constantly of him; her whole heart and soul went out to him unbidden and unsought. She had never known what it was to love—now that it came to her, she did not try to keep it in check, she only knew that she did love, and gave herself up to its sweet intoxication.

Her work upon the stage was mechanical before she met him—now that was changed—for he was her inspiration. He did not need to be present as a spectator. To her he was ever present, in the deep recesses of her heart, where she enthroned him king.

Her auditors marveled at her depth of feeling and magnetism, but they did not know her secret. She, who was looked upon as a heartless statue of ice, was in love, yes, in love with Maurice de La Tour.

As she sat there, her thoughts wandered over the space of her whole life and a sad,

almost woeful expression passed over her beautiful features, replacing the blush of a few moments previous, and a deep sigh escaped her lips, she muttered again, "My father, oh, what is the mystery of his life? But I owe him submission, and I will obey."

Then her thoughts turned to another, José de Alvarez ; her brows knitted and her expression seemed to harden. "Why," she mused, "does my father so insist upon my marriage with him? I do not even bear the respect for him, that I had for poor old Claude Marteau. Now that Monsieur de La Tour has come into my life, the thought of marriage with another is out of the question."

She was startled from this deep reverie by the re-entrance of her maid, who announced that the carriage was ready for her morning drive.

That same day happened to be one of those which Madeleine set aside to receive her friends, and between the hours of two and five, she was the life of a little social gathering, which consisted mostly of suitors, of which she had many. They were of various ages:—bankers, some brokers, government officers and politicians, three deputies and a general; they were captivated by M'lle de Vallerice's brilliant beauty, her refined manners, and the power of bringing out all that was good and

cleverest in the minds of others. They had gradually forced themselves upon her friendship, with more or less hope in the mind of each of final triumph over a virtue which was said to be of the most rigid kind. Not one of them had succeeded, and so they had renounced their first projects, but could not give up their friendly visits to such a beautiful and accomplished hostess.

When the costly bronze clock on the mantle chimed out the hour of five, they all bade her reluctant adieux and took their departure.

Madeleine was very regular in her habits. She rang for her maid, ordered dinner, which she took early on account of her occupation. This over, she told the maid she need not wait up for her, as she would be late, then entering her carriage, which was in waiting, started for the theatre to resume her rôle,—Camille, and again reach all hearts, by the suffering of “one more unfortunate.” That night, above all others, she seemed to feel the agony of the woman she was portraying, and as the curtain dropped after the death scene, the audience with one voice declared that “de Vallerice” had outdone all other efforts. They carried away with them, deep in their hearts, sincere sympathy, which was one day to be recalled in the life of this public idol.

CHAPTER II.

THE DOUBLE LIFE.

ON the same night a man might have been seen making his way along with every precaution and resorting to many roundabout ways to reach the *Rue le Prince*.

He was tall and rather stout, with swarthy skin. His hair was very black, neatly combed. Each individual hair of his heavy black beard seemed to be standing on end, and his rather thin lips were tightly drawn over even, white teeth. His nose was large and well formed. His eyes were small, of a greenish gray, overhung with heavy black eyebrows.

There was something treacherous in his countenance. From his eyes shone a strangely lurid light. He entered the house and, in spite of the darkness, made his way to a room on the fourth floor,—a sort of ante-chamber. Passing through this, he opened a door and found himself in a small room tastefully furnished and lighted by a lamp.

Seated near the hearth and engaged in stirring the fire was a young man, probably twenty-eight or thirty, of medium height,

rather slender, of olive complexion. His features were regular and handsome in outline. A carefully kept mustache, soft and black as his hair, partially concealed well-cut lips, rather heavy perhaps, between which gleamed pearly white teeth. There was a cruel expression to his black almond-shaped eyes, which were at times very ardent and penetrating.

He arose suddenly, as if startled, on hearing the door open, then, recognizing his visitor, advanced quickly to meet him. After satisfying himself that the door was securely closed, and the tapestry portières well drawn, he said in a low voice :

"You are here at last! I have been expecting you for a long time."

His visitor, Chopard, for such he was called, turned down his coat collar and removed a large silk handkerchief, which concealed the lower part of his face.

"Yes, I am here at last, and as I have a great deal to say to you, I must begin at once."

The younger man, Gonzago, replied with flashing eyes, "Is she coming? Will she be here to-night?"

There was a tone of passion in his voice that he could not well conceal.

Chopard replied in one word, "Yes"; but,

noting a look of doubt in his companion's face, continued :

"I bade her meet me here, and she will obey me implicitly, as you know. Now sit down and listen to me, for the time for a complete understanding has come. It is of the greatest importance that you should know me. Though I have never had many secrets from you, some events in my life have not been revealed to you."

He took up a pipe from the table, filled and lighted it, then, seating himself near the fire, began to speak slowly, as if wishing to engrave every word upon the young man's mind.

"My real name, as you know, is——" he did not utter the word, fearing the very walls would betray his secret—— "that name and my youth have long been forgotten in Paris.

"It was when I was twenty-four years of age, and in Vienna, that I met a magnificent young girl, a Hungarian, who dazzled me with her beauty. This chance meeting decided my whole destiny. I fell madly in love. I was considered a handsome fellow, intelligent, and made quite a fine appearance. My eyes were bright, and my teeth were not concealed by this harsh beard. I was always a trifle round-shouldered in spite of my effort to hold myself erect, and I feared this might operate against me, and I had little hope that

the beautiful Hungarian would accept me as a lover. She was an orphan and poor, and I was prosperous. I succeeded after many months in winning her for my wife.

"I need not tell you of my joy and happiness. I loved that creature as man never loved before. It was frenzy and madness. Let us speak of other things."

He rose from his seat as he evoked these memories and walked about the room, nervous and agitated, then, pausing and rejoining his companion near the fire, said :

"My happiness did not last. My dear wife died in giving birth to a little girl. Oh, what terrible despair! I do not know why I have not lost my senses; I was insane for a time. People have told me so. The first passion of grief was followed by complete exhaustion, prostration, stupefaction. Incapable of thought, I had become a mere brute. Poverty perhaps aroused me. I looked around, and saw a lovely child extending her little arms to me. She had her dear mother's features and although so young, resembled her. To-day it is quite another thing; she is her living image. When I look at her I think I see the mother."

He turned now toward Gonzago and, addressing him directly, resumed, "What would you have done in my place, in seeing this charming little creature, your daughter, your own

flesh and blood? You would have said to yourself,—would you not? I must overcome this lethargy, shake off this torpor, and become a man again for the child's sake.

"That is just what I desired to do, but it was too late. The business houses, which had formerly given me credit, were now closed against me. I had neglected them too long, and others had come in and taken my place. As for my old friends, they shunned the poor unfortunate man whose wild eyes had frightened them. They had mistaken despair for madness!

"Men hate you for suffering more than they do, and for not knowing how to stifle your anguish. One passes for a madman when he has loved too deeply, and mourned too bitterly!

"I could find employment nowhere, bread nowhere. So I endured the blackest poverty in the midst of plenty, and a wild desire for vengeance sprung up in my heart. Perhaps I was naturally envious, perhaps all these furies had been only sleeping in my secret heart and had just been awakened in me."

Chopard paused, his face cleared as if by enchantment, his glance softened and a smile almost tender, played about his lips. With more mastery over himself he resumed.

"At the time these feelings of hatred for

the whole human race were taking possession of my soul, my love for my child was increasing, becoming a passion. Is it natural to hate so deeply and to love so deeply? I leave this question for others to answer. It was on my child's account principally that I so bitterly hated, because they had no compassion upon her, because they were allowing her to die of hunger!

"Several months passed in this way. When poverty seizes a man in its clutches that man is lost unless he is endowed with extraordinary energy. I succeeded at least, in gaining food for my child. Later I regained some of my old customers, and made a little money. My child was growing up and becoming very beautiful.

"I placed her in a good French boarding school—. Are you listening to me?" he said, turning to his companion.

"Can you ask such a question, when you are speaking of her?"

"True, I had forgotten. I will continue. The new business I started in Vienna finally ceased to prosper. Poverty, the old companion I knew so well, appeared again, and I feared for my child's sake. I accepted an offer made to me. It was to start to Central Africa with parties who were going to hunt the elephant and trade in ivory. One could gain a fortune

there in a short time, especially if he had no scruples.

"This African scheme pleased me. I confided my child to the care of a relative, a poor woman, and vowed that I would make a fortune."

He rose, shook the ashes from his pipe, which had gone out, filled it anew, and again seated himself.

"My companions had not deceived me. The country was exceedingly productive. I soon left them and started on my own account. I conducted several droves of human cattle from one point in Africa to another. After a few years spent in such business, one becomes more liberal in one's views on many questions. When one has seen so many persons die and has killed several himself in self-defense, he begins to think one more or less makes little difference."

Gonzago shivered, but made no attempt to speak, and Chopard resumed:

"I made a great deal of money there. I heard from my child now and then, but at long intervals, on account of my roving life. Finally her letters were missed, or lost, for none reached me. Fear seized me. Could anything have happened to her? I sold my slaves at reduced prices, left Africa and set sail for Europe. I reached Vienna to find that the

poor old woman with whom I had left my child had died.

"What had become of my daughter? Left alone, she took a position as governess with a Viennese family that had gone to Paris. I hastened there. How was I to find her in this immense city, in which I no longer even recognized myself, so great had been the change? I searched everywhere; I frequented all the public places at which ladies appear. How was I to tell the kind of life she had been leading during my eight years' absence from her? I haunted the public ballrooms and even explored the churches.

"Three months went by,—nothing, nothing of her. Oh, how many wild fancies flitted through my brain. I went round and round like a madman.

"One evening on the Rue . . . my attention was attracted by a large crowd which had gathered before the theater. I glanced up and was startled by the poster—Madeleine de Vallerice. I was seized with a wild hope. Could that be my Madeleine? The last name I did not know, but I determined to enter. I tried to purchase a ticket—impossible! All parts of the house were filled to overflowing, every one had come to see the great star. I managed to find standing room. The curtain rose. I was on the alert, for it was possible

this could be my little child I had left, my daughter. At last applause burst forth on every side. I comprehended it was de Vallerice, the star who had appeared. I thrust aside one, then another, and then a third in my mad desire to view the stage. She spoke, it was her voice, it was she! I had found her."

He paused for a moment to overcome his emotion and collect his thoughts.

"Yes, it was indeed my child, grown to womanhood, and superb in all the glory of her beauty. How could I be the father of such a lovely creature? It seems incomprehensible, but nature is wonderfully capricious at times. I gazed at her with open mouth and fixed, staring eyes. I must have looked like an idiot. When she disappeared amid the plaudits of the audience and a shower of bouquets, I also departed. I could stay there no longer.

"You think, perhaps, that my first act was to rush for the stage door. Bah! you do not know me if you think that. I do not like these great displays of tenderness. My feelings are under control. I feel, I suffer, but I do not betray myself. There is an iron will encased in this body.

"I did not wish all Paris to know that the handsome young actress had a father who had just returned from Central Africa as black as a Negro, a sort of cut-throat adventurer who

had made a fortune dealing in slaves. I engaged a carriage, made the coachman station himself at the door of the theatre, and waited for her to come out. Others were waiting, young men, and an old gentleman whom I afterwards learned was Claude Marteau, a wealthy retired merchant.

"At length she appeared, majestic and disdainful, taking no notice whatever of those around her, paying no attention to their complimentary remarks. She looked around for her carriage, pausing just near the one I occupied. Then I uttered her real name, Madeleine—She started in amazement—who could know her family name? At the same time she caught sight of my face, slightly revealed by the carriage lamps. She gazed, evidently in doubt. Eight years in Africa, exposed to the perils and hardships of desert life, make a great change in one's appearance.

"‘Get into this carriage quickly,’ I said, ‘I am your father.’ She was too thoroughly mistress of herself to faint, she only uttered a suppressed cry of surprise and quickly slipped into the carriage, which instantly drove off. I had given the coachman his orders in advance. She did not throw her arms about me and overwhelm me with kisses. I had taught her that all such outbursts were harmful and foolish."

He lowered his voice, in which there was a tone of sadness, and his eyes became thoughtful as he added, "Besides I am not sure that she loves me. My mysterious life, of which she knows absolutely nothing, inspires her with a sort of awe and fear. Her instincts divined in me a father. For that reason she respects, but it is not probable that she really loves me. But what does that matter? I love her; that suffices for me. People have undertaken to divide love into paternal, filial, and maternal. That is all nonsense. The word love admits of no adjective. It can be all expressed in a few words, abnegation, self-sacrifice, utter forgetfulness of self, devotion extended to the farthest limit, even though repaid by the blackest ingratitude!

"Does not the mother know that the child adored for years, and who in return adores her, may one day leave her for a mere stranger? That she will sacrifice all for him? That if forced to choose between the mother who reared her and the person whom she has just met, she will choose the latter? Yes, she knows it, but she does not love her daughter any the less on that account. She obeys the universal law; she sacrifices herself to the one beloved.

"I love my child with the heart of a mother and am indifferent as to the result and hope

for no reward. I give myself wholly and entirely to her.

"Our carriage conveyed us to a house which I was then occupying on the Avenue Trudaine. Madeleine entered with me, and we had a long conversation. She expressed her reason for leaving Vienna. She had not heard from me for two years, and she thought me dead. The death of her relative, the old lady, left her alone. She received the offer to go to Paris as governess, to which I have already alluded. The family wished her to return to Vienna, but she liked Paris and determined to remain here. The money she had earned was soon exhausted. Offers of every sort were made to her, as is usually the case with a handsome woman, but she rejected them all. She was an honest girl and determined to remain so. She was proud and wished to work for her living.

"She had been importuned for some time to go upon the stage, and as that offered greater returns than anything else she could think of, she accepted, with what success you already know. The very next day after I found her she showed me a very impassioned letter from Claude Marteau, the rich old merchant, in which he proposed marriage. I tried to persuade her to accept his offer, retire from the stage and become his wife, as it meant a

life of ease and luxury ; but she rebelled, giving the reason that she did not, and could not love him. I exerted my authority and made her accept him, but she would not consent to give up the stage before the close of the season, so I let her have her way.

"I had, in our first interview, charged Madeleine that under no circumstances whatever should she divulge her real name, or mention her father in any way ; that to all the world I was dead and must remain so. She did not seek to know my motive for this, but consented to submission, as she does in most things. I discovered that Claude Marteau had a brother and a niece somewhere here in Paris, to whom he was to leave the bulk of his fortune,—*that* meant only part for my child.

"There was but one way out of it. I was determined that Madeleine should have the old man's money. I drew up what he thought to be a marriage settlement, having represented myself to him as her notary. He signed it, as he supposed ; but by a trick in placing the papers in a certain way, he signed a will, wherein all his money is to go to her without even the trouble of a marriage ceremony."

Gonzago, who had remained silent all this time, now arose and anxiously looked into Chopard's face, which had assumed a savage expression as he continued :

"Shortly after that he died."

Gonzago gave a start, but Chopard continued with a low, coarse laugh :

"The doctors said it was apoplexy. They may have to repeat their verdict before long."

Gonzago, now thoroughly frightened, clutched Chopard by the arm and exclaimed, "What do you mean?"

"Sit down, man; don't be a fool," he coarsely replied, "I simply hypnotized him. There is another matter of which I want to speak, which concerns you."

Gonzago was all attention.

"You are young, handsome, and I know you love my daughter. You must marry her."

These last words made Gonzago's eyes sparkle.

"You must win her love. This calm, gentle creature, who bears for me only a moderate affection, will love madly when she does love. I know her. In this one thing she has my nature. For the man she loves, she would willingly die."

This outburst was almost passionate. He continued, but more calmly :

"She knows you as Don José, Marquis de Alvarez. If you boldly adopt the course I have mapped out for you, you will profit by the papers I will give you.

"But," he added with marked force and emphasis, "Madeleine must never learn of this

deception, or she will hate and despise you ; so guard the secret as you do your life. She is good and honorable by nature and will never submit to deceit."

His voice again became low and even mild ; his child was the one tender spot in the heart of this human brute.

Chopard, even with his strong and powerful will, was much agitated in reviewing his terrible and compromising past. He paced the room for some time, then, resuming his seat, he continued the conversation.

"Without a position in the world and some capital, you can never amount to anything. I might have influenced you to good instead of evil, but knowing you as I do, and after serious reflection, I have decided to the contrary. You are not of the stuff of which great and good men are made."

Gonzago did not display any annoyance at this compliment paid him, for not a muscle of his handsome face moved. As Chopard uttered these last words he arose, stepped to the table on which the lamp was, took from his pocket a package, opened it and drew forth a long envelope which contained numerous papers written in a fine hand. The signature and seals of several foreign chancellors were affixed to them. He handled them quickly, without the slightest sign of emotion.

"Take these and keep them safely, follow the instructions as I have explained, and in a short time you will be one of the richest men in France. Don't imagine," he continued, "that I am doing this for you. It is for my daughter."

Gonzago was listening with great interest; then as if with sudden thought, he said, "But suppose Madeleine should refuse my love, if she will not accept me?"

"Oh, she will obey me, she must. Then my ambition for her will be realized. She will have a title, which she is fitted so well to grace. She will be rich and powerful."

Then he added slowly, as if to give weight to his words, and laying his hand on his companion's shoulder, "It is I who have made you, I who have created you, but it is for her—my Madeleine, my child,—and it is with her alone you will share the title and wealth with which I will invest you. I am anxious to perfect all my arrangements this night, for I may not see you or my child again for some time."

"Are you going to leave Paris?" Gonzago asked quickly, at last finding his voice.

"I am not such a fool. I will not leave Paris nor the position I occupy, but I may possibly commit an error; and in order that neither you nor Madeleine be compromised, I

must see you no more. All our relations must cease to-night, this is settled." Then he added slowly and again with great depth of feeling. "Should I ever at any time be arrested, I shall never reveal my true name. They will never discover it. I will defy them. Should such a thing ever happen, I might be tried, and even convicted, or executed, but my child must never know it is her father. This is my greatest wish, so do not forget it. You are all right and safe, as long as I do not speak, I will deal with you, as you deal with my child."

He went to the mantle where the clock stood.

"The clock is about to strike twelve. She will soon be here, and remember, if I remain silent, no one will ever suspect you. Not a word before her."

At this moment the clock struck, and before the sound had died away, the door softly opened and Madeleine de Vallerice entered the room.

Gonzago upon seeing her, started to meet her with outstretched hands, his eyes sparkling, a smile upon his cruel, handsome mouth, while Chopard, standing by the fireplace, awaited her, calm and composed.

Madeleine took the hand extended by Gonzago and greeted him graciously, then approaching her father, held her forehead to him, upon which he imprinted a single cold kiss.

She cast aside her long cloak, which Gonzago hastened to take from her. Her beautiful, well-developed form was plainly revealed by a perfect fitting princess dress of a dark, rich material. She took off her hat and thick veil, which covered her head, showing her charming face flushed from the cool night air.

After a moment of silent ecstasy which he could not altogether control, Chopard addressed his daughter. "I have something to say to you."

"I was sure of it," she responded, "and I must confess I am curious to know what it is. I do not understand the object of bringing me here at this hour, still I am delighted to see you, my father."

A look of genuine delight came into his face at this pretty speech. He would gladly have given his life to be tenderly loved by this idolized daughter.

"It is easily explained, my child. You must understand in the first place that your position before the public is not clear. In their eyes you are the daughter of a foreign woman and a certain man, a kind of adventurer, —who disappeared, no one knows when or where. You first revealed your existence under an assumed name. You live in luxury, and no one knows who supplies you with the means."

"But, father," she replied indignantly, "have I not a profession that pays me excellently, and have I not you to lavish money upon me?"

"Ah, very true, but they are not aware of my existence and are sure, if they stop to think, that you are extravagant; true, you are surrounded by wealthy and influential men, but if they were summoned before the *Juge d'instruction*, each would declare under oath, that he had never rendered you the slightest pecuniary aid. Is this not a fact?"

"Certainly, it is true," she responded proudly, "thanks to you."

"Nevertheless, my dear," he continued, "you must not deceive yourself; your position is not free from grave suspicion."

"I venture to say you are mistaken, father; my actions are above suspicion, and my private affairs are not the business of any one, especially when I accept favors from none."

Chopard was troubled; he never found it so hard in his life to talk to this loved one as on this night. Something in his strong heart seemed to cry out, this is the last time on earth. But he was not given to sentiment, and he cast aside the little good that was struggling for ascendancy and asked in a rather gruff tone, "Are you sure you were not followed?"

"Absolutely certain, I have obeyed the instructions you gave me, this time as upon all other occasions." Then she spoke in a tender persuasive tone, "Something troubles you to-night, father. What is it?"

He interrupted her in a firm voice, "You will return here no more, neither to-morrow nor ever." He arose quickly and paced the room.

Gonzago had been seated in silence, feasting his eyes on the face and form of the woman before him, without uttering a word.

Madeleine turned to him and exclaimed, "What does he mean?"

Chopard stopped short in his walk.

"I can vouch for the past, I cannot be responsible for the future."

"You do not mean you are going away? We have been separated so much, I cannot bear to think of that."

There was true sadness in her voice as she spoke, and her face expressed real sorrow, for, even with all his mystery and apparent gruffness, there was a feeling, not of love perhaps, but of pity for him, her father. And pity is often akin to love. He detected the tone of sadness, and, as his heart hungered for her love, he mistook the expression of pity, and his hard nature softened. She was almost startled when he impulsively took both her delicate white hands in his great, ugly, bony

ones, and said with the greatest show of affection that he had ever expressed toward her :

"My daughter—my Madeleine, I do not wish to be separated from you, for I believe if I could take my place in the world beside you, you have power to change my brutal nature. You have your mother's sweet voice and face—oh, how she comes back to me now, in the person of her child. But it is impossible—the die is cast—I must go for a short time. All your interests require it. The existence you have heretofore led cannot longer continue."

"Then you are really going to leave me?" she replied, not seeming to catch the true meaning of his words. "Yes, this has been our only place of meeting; to-morrow it will no longer be at our disposal. We have had enough of mysteries. Besides I have already made my arrangements for departure. I will return to Africa for a while. I must make another fortune."

"Shall I not see you again before your departure?"

She was accustomed to entire submission to him and knew it would be useless to argue.

He had now almost resumed his self-control and answered somewhat in a tone of his old authority.

"No, it is hardly likely, so I will say farewell to-night."

Madeleine's heart seemed to make a sudden lurch, and for a moment she had to control herself, but did not trust her voice to speak. Her father continued, "I have something to say to you before I go. The time has now come for me to tell you. I have chosen the man whom I wish you to marry."

Madeleine started and uttered the one simple word in astonishment—"Father!"

Chopard continued in a tone of determination :

"Yes, it is our friend here, José. He has a title and a great fortune. Up to the present time, family reasons have obliged him to maintain a sort of incognito except to myself, who have known him so long. There is no further necessity for remaining silent. He has confessed to me his great love for you, and wishes to bestow upon you his title, wealth, position, in short, he wishes to make you his wife."

Gonzago nodded as if in confirmation of Chopard's words, his eyes sparkled with a passionate gleam. In one bound he was by Madeleine's side.

She sprang from her seat on the sofa to avoid him. Drawing herself up in calm dignity, she seemed to tower in height and bearing, and her beautiful eyes shot in cold glances from her father to the man who wished to claim her.

She was evidently ready to give battle. For once Chopard was astonished at her evident rebellion ; but he controlled himself and exclaimed in a hard, cold voice :

“ It is my wish, my command, that you become the Marquise de Alvarez.” Madeleine looked her father coldly in the face and in a tone of voice quite as hard as his own, answered :

“ This man may be your friend, father, but I do not love him, I do not even respect him. I shall never become his wife.”

CHAPTER III.

AN EVENTFUL DAY.

ABOUT two o'clock in the afternoon of the 22nd of October, a man wearing a black sur-tout buttoned to the chin, his hat a little to one side, his boots shining, traversed the garden path which led to the iron gate and passed into the Boulevard. He took the Rue du Docteur which soon brought him to the Rue de Clichy.

He was busily engaged in deep thought. His movements showed that he was vigorous in spite of his sixty years and his trying campaigns, and worry and trouble over a tedious and hard fought law-suit. In stature he was not over tall, but stout; his clear blue eyes keen, and under his heavy gray moustache, which he sported as proudly as in his balmy days, one could discern healthy red lips, animated by a gracious smile.

This description will serve to introduce to our reader, Captain Jules Marteau, a bluff genial-hearted old sea captain, now retired from active service on half-pay.

He walked a short distance up the Avenue,

but on reaching the *Cité des Fleurs*, he turned aside and entered the street, where several handsome residences and gardens are located.

Near the entrance to the terrace is the office of a real estate broker. Captain Marteau entered the glass door and addressing a gentleman seated at a desk said, "Good afternoon, Monsieur Bonnin, you see I am punctual."

Monsieur Bonnin, a tall lanky individual arose, adjusted his glasses and came forward, recognizing his visitor. "Ah! Captain Marteau, I have made the necessary inquiries and your offer is accepted with, or without security."

The Captain remained some time longer, then consulting his watch, started, as if he had already given unnecessary time to the matter, and retraced his steps to the Avenue de Clichy.

On reaching the Avenue, he walked briskly along, frequently consulting his watch, as if fearing he would be late. His movements were nervous and agitated, as if hastening to an important rendezvous, upon which his future—perhaps his happiness depended.

When he reached the city proper, he descended the Rue de Clichy, turned into the Chaussée d'Antin, crossed the Boulevard at ten minutes past three exactly, and entered a building on the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs near the passage Choiseul.

He ascended one flight of stairs, turned a

brass knob, and found himself in the office of Maurice de La Tour.

A single clerk was seated at a desk, busily engaged in copying some legal document. Something of a smile passed over the thin hard lips of the clerk as he looked up and recognized the old man.

Seen now in the light of day engaged at his work, his small gray eyes covered with green glasses, his dark swarthy face and forehead denoted great intelligence despite its sarcastic expression.

This man was none other than Chopard, chief clerk of Maurice de La Tour, a rising young notary.

The Captain inquired of the clerk if Monsieur de La Tour was ready to receive him. "Not just yet," replied the clerk glancing up quickly, his eyes dropping again to his work.

"But he told me to be here at three, it is now fifteen minutes past," again consulting his watch.

"Someone has just entered his private office and you will be obliged to wait."

"Very well," said the old Captain, seating himself resignedly.

The Captain had spent many hours before, waiting in this same office, and had abundant opportunity of becoming acquainted with the clerk of the establishment, and a conversation

soon sprung up between the Captain and Chopard.

"Well, Captain," remarked the latter—"the great day has come at last."

"Why do you know?" inquired the Captain in surprise.

"Do you suppose I am ignorant of all that is going on in my employer's office? Legal documents must be drawn up, and you forget that I am his chief clerk."

He made these remarks slowly, like a person who wished to occupy the listener's attention as long as possible. He had carefully studied hypnotism, and at times used the power he possessed upon unsuspecting listeners. His voice was deep and heavy, yet at times strangely musical.

"And is your daughter still in ignorance of her good fortune?" inquired the clerk after a moment's silence.

"She knows nothing whatever about it," replied the Captain, "nor has she the slightest suspicion of the trouble. I have been brave enough to keep silent for eighteen months. I did not wish her to share suspense, which might also result only in cruel disappointment."

"But you will tell her now, as soon as you return home, will you not?"

"Most assuredly, if everything is settled to-day."

"Oh, you need have no fears on that score, it will be all concluded to-day."

The old Captain's face lighted up with a joyous smile, as he exclaimed heartily, "I thank the great Providence, for it means so much happiness to my beloved child."

A savage gleam crossed the face of the chief clerk as he said, eyeing the old man from behind his green glasses :

"I do not believe there will be much sleep for you to-night, happiness makes one wakeful."

"Nonsense," replied the Captain, smiling, "like all girls of her age she is a sound sleeper and as for me, when ten o'clock comes I retire, shut my eyes and fall asleep before one can count ten."

"But do you never awaken during the night?" inquired Chopard.

"Why should I? I go to bed to sleep—besides nothing disturbs me. I have made so many voyages upon the sea, I am accustomed to the noise and tramp of the sailors."

"I dare say you can scarcely wait to bring the good tidings to your daughter? You will no doubt go to her at once?"

Any one with the least taint of suspicion in his nature might detect a tone of more than ordinary interest in the questioner, but Captain Marteau, honest by nature, did not suspect

anything more than a friendly interest in the clerk in his good fortune, and he replied :

“No! I cannot go to her at once, I am planning a little surprise, in fact I have selected a residence which I am to lease, and on my way home I will be obliged to call and make an examination of the premises, as I wish to take her to see them to-morrow,—besides it will not take over an hour, and I will be more satisfied when I have seen the place.”

While he was speaking a bell sounded from the private office, and Chopard informed the Captain that the notary was now ready to see him.

Marteau started for the private office, his beaming face and sparkling eyes revealing the happiness he felt. The voice of Monsieur de La Tour was heard in a tone of surprise as he entered.

“Why, Captain, are you here? I have been expecting you for over an hour.”

The old Captain was heard to reply, “I thought you were engaged with some one and I did not wish to disturb you.”

As he passed through the heavy oaken door, it closed behind him.

Chopard drew from his pocket a clumsy old fashioned silver watch and muttered to himself with a half chuckle—“five o'clock,” then hearing one of the other clerks enter,

hastily replaced the watch in his pocket. He went to a hook in the corner near the desk and taking from it a respectable looking surtout put it on, replacing his rather worn office coat, which he hung on the hook, and taking his hat, started for the outer door, descended the stairs and crossed the courtyard.

He walked briskly, his small gray eyes sparkled and a strange fiendish smile played upon his thin lips, his fingers seemed to work convulsively as if to keep pace with his thoughts.

He walked rapidly along the Avenue de Clichy and soon reached the Rue du Docteur.

CHAPTER IV.

IVY VILLA.

AT the intersection of the Avenue de Clichy, with the Avenue Saint Ouen, a sudden turn to the left leads down a very steep declivity.

This is a portion of the Batignolles. A moderately long walk brings you to the gates of Paris. Skirting the inclosing walls begins the Boulevard Bessières. This is one of the suburbs of that greatest of all Cities—Paris.

It is planted with trees, scattered with houses, hovels rather than dwellings, and is but a short distance from the fortifications.

It was the custom of the soldiers to march at certain intervals in this quarter, which gave the inhabitants a feeling of safety. On the right side of the Boulevard stands a wall of masonry surrounding a space of about one hundred feet square. To one side of the enclosure, with the side facing the Boulevard is a two story cottage which attracted special attention, by its contrast with the surroundings.

A very charming picture indeed it presented, this lovely afternoon in Autumn, as the bright

sunshine lighted up patches of liquid gold here and there, showing the beauties of the simple, but picturesque architecture. The ornamental iron gates, the tender green foliage, the creeping ivy intermingled with running rose bushes, which nearly covered the old red brick wall, made a pretty contrast.

The well kept garden with its beds of choicest flowers, the rustic table and seats so temptingly placed in the shade under the apple tree, and the fragrant perfume of the graceful drooping vines were enchanting.

This house was called Ivy Villa, a name well suited to the place. Within this Villa dwelt Jules Marteau, the genial old sea Captain, and his charming daughter Julie. She was a bright blue-eyed, light-hearted winsome girl of eighteen, of a slight girlish figure, naturally wavy chestnut hair, finely shaped and delicate features, small mouth, with full scarlet lips.

Her chief charm was in the radiance of her beaming smile and happy face.

She had never remembered a mother's care or felt a mother's loss, for the Captain's wife had died when Julie was scarcely three years old, and in his great love and devotion for his motherless child, he had supplied the place of both mother and father.

Julie possessed all the sterling qualities which had formed a part of both her parents, and she

loved the old sailor with all the ardor of her young heart.

At a very early age her father placed her in the care of the good sisters of Mount Carmel, thus securing her educational training.

The old Captain was retired from active service, and although his pension was small, he felt no uneasiness for his child's future, for his brother Claude Marteau, the retired and wealthy merchant, had promised to make Julie his sole heir.

They had just settled down to enjoy their new home when the brother died suddenly from apoplexy, so the doctors said. They were deeply grieved at the sudden and unexpected death of their relative, but a shock came when it was discovered that all his wealth had been left to a complete stranger.

This so changed the plans of the old Captain, that he was obliged to curtail his expenses in order to lay up something for Julie, should he be taken from her. So he rented the place we have described ("Ivy Villa") and determined to make the best of his misfortune with his limited means.

Yet no happier man existed than he, for in the love of his charming daughter he was prouder than any king on his throne.

Although Julie loved her father very ten-

derly, her love was divided with another. On coming home to her father the first one to greet her was Maurice de La Tour, suffice it to say it was a case of love at first sight.

This met with the Captain's approval for he had known the young man for a long time, and had learned to love him as a son.

It was through the advice of this young notary, that the Captain was induced to contest the will which was decided against them. An appeal was taken with what results we have already seen.

The old Captain's household consisted of his daughter Julie, Christine Girard and her little daughter, a bright sunnyhaired child, the pet of the household.

Christine acted as housekeeper, cook, and often companion to Julie when her father was absent. She had, through unfortunate circumstances been forced to earn a living for herself and child.

We have already described the exterior of Ivy Villa, and will now proceed to give the reader some idea of the interior.

From the old iron gate a gravel walk led up to the porch, which was reached by a few steps. Then by a descent of two steps, we enter the room through an old fashioned door. One could sit in this room and have a full view of the garden, for nearly this one side, from porch

to ceiling was of glass, with old fashioned panes. A large window looked out East, commanding a view of the Boulevard with its rows of trees and poor neglected looking dwellings.

The interior of the room was neatly furnished, with no pretence whatever to display. The walls were covered with cheap gray paper, finished at the ceiling with a fancy border. On the walls were fastened sabers, swords, pistols of divers sort, and also war clubs, all souvenirs of the old Captain's campaigns. A large picture of a ship at full speed hung over the old fashioned fireplace.

Out of this room was one fitted up with great neatness and care and occupied by Julie as her chamber. Opposite was another door leading to the kitchen.

From near the window rose a very primitive stairs, leading to a landing, and hall extending beyond.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONVICT.

IT was near the close of the afternoon when Christine Girard entered the living-room at Ivy Villa.

She went to the window and looked wistfully out, her eyes scanning the Boulevard as far as she could see.

She was a woman about thirty, but threads of silver had begun to show in her glossy dark hair, and marks of great sorrow were imprinted upon her careworn face.

As she stood there looking out upon the Boulevard, she noticed that the soldiers were approaching from the fortifications on their patrol. She could plainly hear their even tread, and a look of anxiety passed over her worn features. A deep sigh escaped her lips, as she murmured to herself:

“Oh! how my poor heart beats.”

She was startled by hearing her own name and casting a quick glance toward the door from whence the voice came, she sprang forward, opened it hurriedly and admitted a man who immediately crouched behind her.

"Quick, wife, shut the door!"

It was very evident that he was trying to escape from some one, for just then two policemen passed the window, and when they were well out of sight he straightened himself, and in less time than it takes to relate it, the two were clasped in a fond embrace, while the woman murmured, "Paul, my husband, you are here at last."

He replied with a hasty look around, "Christine, that was a narrow escape." This man who has just entered in such a suspicious manner, was Paul Girard, the husband of Christine.

He was of medium height, a little round shouldered or stooped, and wore a dark full beard, was attired in a gardener's blouse and soft hat. His clothes were travel stained, his beard and hair, which he wore quite long, were slightly tinged with gray.

He looked fully fifty, yet he was not over thirty-eight. His haggard features told of long and bitter suffering. After the first greeting, his wife still clasped his hands, and stroking them with her own, said:—

"I was getting very anxious about you, Paul, and feared you would not be able to come."

He answered in hurried tones, "I had considerable trouble, wife, for you know. I can only steal away unobserved and I have every

reason to believe my former visits have been detected. Have you noticed anything unusual?"

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "I understand. For the last three months, in fact ever since your last visit, I have noticed that the police have been keeping, what I supposed, a watch on this house. It is not possible your absence has been discovered?"

"It looks like it, wife," he added, "for when one is under suspicion the police are at once notified, and a strict watch is maintained."

Then he added, his voice filled with emotion, "I fear it will be a long time before I can take the chances of coming again, for I am still under police surveillance for the next five years."

Then as if about to fall he clasped his hands in agony. "Five years! Merciful Heavens! my heart sinks at the very thought of it." His wife, trying to encourage and console him, placed both her hands on his shoulders and in a sweet voice said:

"Cheer up, my dear husband, the time will soon pass by and then you will be free."

Then with sudden thought he exclaimed, "Oh! how selfish I am, our child, our little Marie, is she better? You wrote me she was ill!"

"Yes, our little Marie is well again, thanks

to these good people. Since we have found a home here with good Mademoiselle Marteau, she is better than she has been for months."

"Thank God," he exclaimed fervently—raising his sad eyes to Heaven, "I can endure anything now, that she is well. Think of it, wife, for four long years I have not been able to clasp my darling child to my heart, for fear that in her innocent childish prattle, she might betray these stolen visits of her poor wretched father."

"Oh, to think of five years' imprisonment already undergone, and all for an act of charity. Condemned for another's crime!" Here the poor unfortunate man broke down completely and great tears followed each other over his worn cheeks.

He tried to control himself and turned to his wife.

"I know it is unmanly to weep, but tears keep the heart from breaking."

"My poor husband, how you have suffered," and she wrung her hands in agony of despair.

"Suffered, what have I not suffered? The whip and the chain, blows for a word, the brand for my flesh, and starvation my reward. For five years I have wept and prayed for deliverance from the tortures I endured. For five years I have cursed the very sun that scorched me, and the sea that mocked me with its freedom."

Sinking into a seat he covered his face with his hands, and the tears of misery forced themselves through his trembling fingers. His wife placing her arms around his neck, and in a soothing voice said, "Have courage, Paul, don't despair, it is unlike you to give way like this. The real robber may yet be found and your innocence proclaimed to the world."

With a voice filled with emotion he answered, "Would that repay for years of suffering and degradation? Would it repay for tears of blood you have shed? Would it compensate for the separation from our only child, the sunshine of our once happy life?"

Then starting up and in the agony of despair cried out, "The whole world is against me and I hate it." He paced back and forth two or three times then continued, "I fear for you, Christine. I fear for our child. When this Captain Marteau took you into his service, he little knew it was the wife and child of a convicted felon he was sheltering."

"Ah, you don't know them," eagerly exclaimed Christine. "They are both good and compassionate. I could not deceive them. He did not turn me out when I told him my story, nor did he despise you."

Paul gazed at her in utter astonishment. Clutching her convulsively by the arm, almost in a whisper cried, "What! You have not

told them? It cannot be that they know all and still retain you."

Just then a slight noise was heard and he turned as if to fly in terror. Julie Marteau had entered the room, and stood hesitating as if she had intruded.

Christine turned to her husband, and in reassuring tones, said, "You need have no fear, it is only Mademoiselle Julie."

The young girl answered in a musical voice, "Ah! Christine, you have a visitor, I see?"

Christine lowered her eyes and in a pleading tone—

"Forgive me, Mademoiselle, he is my husband." Julie with a gracious smile extended her hand to the poor crestfallen man before her, at the same time saying, "I am glad to meet you, Monsieur."

Paul respectfully declined the extended hand, and with bowed head exclaimed, "Your pardon, Mademoiselle, a thousand times, but I cannot take your hand, you know my history."

"Yes," she answered quickly, "and I believe in your innocence." At the same moment she made a step forward, caught his right hand in both of her tiny white ones, and gave him a hearty shake.

The poor prisoner was so overcome that he was about to break down again, when the

chimes of the little clock on the mantle rang out the hour.

He started, exclaiming at the same time, "I must go now, in order to catch the eight o'clock train for Orleans, or my absence may be discovered. Besides I have no right here in this house. Then to Julie he exclaimed in a voice trembling with emotion :

"Oh! Mademoiselle, you will not betray me, you will permit me to see my wife again, and hear from my child?"

"Yes," she answered, you are welcome to visit this house when ever you choose. Be comforted, your wife and child will always find a good home here with my father and myself."

He took the hand she again offered him and bending low kissed it reverently.

"Thank you, Mademoiselle. May Heaven bless you for your kindness to the poor convict, his wife and little one. Goodbye."

Christine had gone to the door and looked out into the garden, to assure herself that no one was approaching, then went to the window. She turned suddenly and exclaimed quickly:

"You cannot go now, the police are approaching, you would surely be discovered."

"But, I will miss the eight o'clock train!" His wife with a quick thought replied, "You must remain for a later train, come with me, I

will secret you until the police have passed at eleven o'clock. You can then catch the eleven forty-five train and report to the missionary in the morning. Come quickly!"

Two policemen were seen approaching as Christine, followed by her husband, passed hurriedly through the door leading to the kitchen.

CHAPTER VI.

THE UNWELCOME GUESTS.

As Christine Girard and her heartbroken husband hurriedly left the room, Julie looked after them with an expression of true compassion on her handsome youthful face, murmuring to herself :

“ Poor people, how unhappy in life is their lot, and how happy is mine, with a father who loves me better than all else in the world, and Maurice—dear Maurice, I ought to be, and I am very, very happy ; there is not a cloud to cross the sunshine of my life.”

The expression of sadness changed to one of radiance, at the mention of her lover, and a faint flush overspread her cheeks.

A joyous, merry laugh was heard to issue from the direction of the landing at the head of the stairs, and a child about six years of age came running down in great joy holding up a doll. She ran to Julie, and kissing her said in happy tones, “ Look, Mademoiselle, mamma has dressed the pretty doll you gave me, and I called her little Julie.”

Julie seemed as delighted as the child. She

kissed the little one and took the doll to examine its new clothes.

"What a dear good girl you are, always trying to give others pleasure." She was not over large for her years, with delicate, pale features, large blue eyes and sunny hair. She was the daughter of Christine and the poor convict.

She looked thoughtfully at Julie and replied, "Ah! Mademoiselle, I would be very naughty if I did not try to be a good girl. I remember how kind you are, and how you nursed me when I was so ill."

Christine re-entered from the kitchen, and the traces of tears were plainly visible. The little one ran and threw her arms around her mother and said in a reproachful tone:—

"Dear mamma, you have been crying again. I heard you pray when I was sick, that if the good God spared me to you, you would never cry again."

The poor woman took the child in her arms. "Hush, my darling, we cannot always do as we think we can."

Julie had been looking out of the window and turning said anxiously, "Oh! Christine, I hope papa will soon come! Is dinner ready?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle. The master has been away from home very much of late."

Julie had seated herself at the table, while Christine busied about the room, spreading the table for dinner.

"Yes, for the past two weeks in particular," Julie replied. "Oh dear, I do hope they are not bothering about that will business." Christine looked inquiringly.

"I thought that was all decided long ago?"

"So it was, and papa had entirely given up the matter, but our friend Maurice, who is a lawyer you know, advised him to appeal from the decision of the lower court to a higher."

"Why did they take so much interest, Mademoiselle? I am not acquainted with the facts."

"Sit down, Christine, I will tell you; you see my uncle Claude Marteau, who was very rich, told papa that at his death, he intended leaving his entire fortune to me. When he died, a will was found, bequeathing his entire fortune to Madeleine de Vallerice."

"And who is Madeleine de Vallerice?" asked Christine.

"Why, she is the beautiful woman who has had all Paris at her feet, for the past two seasons."

"Oh! yes," quickly replied Christine, "I remember,—the actress."

The little child was sitting near the window, apparently taken up with her doll. She turned

suddenly to her mother and asked, "What is an actress, mamma?"

"That is a question I can scarcely answer, my dear, but they are usually called, heartless women of the world."

Julie continued, "Oh! I do hope they are not troubling any more about it. It has already caused no end of anxiety and expense."

Here she was interrupted by a ring at the gate bell. "Ah! that must be papa now." She sprang joyously to her feet, while the child started to run up stairs, exclaiming:

"I'll go get Captain's slippers, Mademoiselle," and she disappeared from the landing above.

Christine meanwhile had gone to the door and opened it, starting back in surprise, as a strange man stood in the doorway. He accosted her in a deep voice. "Is Captain Marteau at home?"

Christine replied timidly, "No, Monsieur."

The man shot a quick glance from beneath his heavy eyebrows, and, descending the two steps into the room, looked straight at Julie. "Are you the daughter of Captain Marteau?"

The evil glance from the small gray eyes frightened her, and she instinctively shrank from him. She answered, "Yes, Monsieur."

He deliberately seated himself, saying, with marked politeness, "I have an appointment

with him. With your permission, I will wait."

Julie turned to Christine, and in an undertone of terror said, "What an evil looking man."

Then she started, as if to enter her own room, when Christine took her by the arm. "No, not there, let us go into the garden."

The two women lost no time in making an exit into the garden, where they hoped at any moment for the return of Captain Marteau.

Chopard, for this was none other than the chief clerk, looking after Julie as she disappeared, muttered in a hoarse voice and savage expression, "So that pale-faced girl is Julie Marteau. Curse her! That is the daughter of whom the talkative old Captain spoke so much in Monsieur de La Tour's office. He boasted of her grace and beauty, but she does not compare with my daughter. I contrived to gain the old Captain's confidence, and delay him in the office until after four o'clock, so that all the banks would be closed, and he would be obliged to carry the money home"—savagely—"the money he has robbed my child of. But I must be quick, and make my observation before they return."

He took a hurried survey of the room and ascended the stairs, stopping on the landing

and muttering, "Yes, that must be the old Captain's room, and there at the end of the hall, the servant and her child sleep."

As he descended the stairs, his weight caused them to creak.

"Ah," he said, "this is a point to be remembered."

Just at this point little Marie appeared on the landing above, joyously calling out, "Here are your slippers, Captain." The child seeing no one but the stranger started. Chopard, being suddenly surprised, glared for an instant. Seeing it was a child, his expression changed quickly to a smile. He was about to speak pleasantly to her, but she had already dropped the slippers which she carried, and fled in alarm.

"Now for the means of entrance." He took the key from the lock, where Christine had left it, and hastily put it into his pocket.

"The same key opens both the door of the house and the garden gate. There are two, one is the Captain's, which he carries with him, and this, the other one, is used by the servant."

"Ah! just in time." He scarcely had re-seated himself and resumed the supposed reading of the paper, when Christine and Julie re-entered from the garden.

"I am somewhat pressed for time," consult-

ing his watch. "I cannot wait, but will call again." He returned the paper to Julie with the same fiendish expression, and, bowing politely, made a rather hasty exit, and was soon out of the garden into the street. Julie exclaimed in a terrified voice, "Oh! what an evil looking man. I wonder what business papa could have with him?"

Christine replied in a determined manner, as she went to the window :

"I don't believe he had any business with him, Mademoiselle."

Julie shuddered, as a thought passed through her mind. "Oh! you are right, perhaps he came here to rob."

"You need not be alarmed, Mademoiselle, for here comes Monsieur de La Tour."

Julie ran to the window, and in ecstasy threw it open. At this moment shouts were heard. A carriage with a pair of maddened horses swung with a short turn into the Boulevard. "Look, look, Christine!" cried Julie. "A pair of maddened horses are tearing through the street, with a carriage containing a lady. Oh! she will be dashed to the ground."

"No," cried Christine, "Monsieur de La Tour seizes the bridle." Julie almost shrieked.

"Oh! he will be killed." She hid her face in her hands, and trembled violently.

"No, no!" exclaimed Christine, "he has brought them to a standstill." Julie had not moved, but being reassured by the shouts and cheers of bravos, which went up from the crowd, that had so quickly gathered, she inquired of a policeman passing, "Do you know that lady who has had such a miraculous escape?"

The policeman quickly replied, "Oh! yes, it is Mademoiselle de Vallerice."

Christine who was still watching observed, "They are taking her out of the carriage, she must be injured. Monsieur de La Tour is bringing her here."

Before the two women could recover from this astonishment, Maurice de La Tour entered, supporting the half fainting form of Madeleine de Vallerice.

Maurice half led, half carried his fair burden, and having placed her on a chair, which Christine had hurriedly supplied, he said in a deep, manly voice :

"The lady is faint, bring a glass of water, if you please." Christine had already poured out a glass of water, and as she was about to pass it to Julie, little Marie, who had made her appearance during the excitement, took the glass from her mother's hand, and hurried to the side of Madeleine.

Maurice de La Tour was a tall, finely built,



"At the peril of his life he had brought them to a standstill."

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manly young fellow of about thirty. He wore no beard whatever, and his open, honest countenance stamped him at once a man of heart and brain. His eyes were large, and very expressive, of a blue-gray, shaded by long, dark lashes, and finely arched, dark eyebrows. His hair was dark brown, soft and abundant, and waved back from his broad, white brow.

His features were large and classical, his expression inclined to be serious. He was a man to put through anything once undertaken in a just cause, for his chin, without being too heavy, showed great determination.

After placing Madeleine in the chair, and while he asked for the water, he did not lose the opportunity to clasp the hand of his sweetheart in both his own, and the expression of love which beamed on his manly countenance, and the fervor of his action, indicated more than words, the world of love in his heart.

He turned to Madeleine and asked politely, "I trust you are not hurt, Mademoiselle?" Madeleine roused herself from a sort of collapsed position into which she had fallen, and with somewhat of an effort replied, "No, but quite frightened, I assure you. I trust Jacques was not injured, when he was thrown from the box."

Maurice reassured her, that the driver was only a little shaken up by his experience, then turning to Julie and Christine, who were near

the window, continued, as if by way of introduction :

“ This is Madeleine de Vallerice.”

The two women seemed to be brought back to a realization as to the character of the visitor, and both exclaimed, as if in one breath, “ Madeleine de Vallerice !”

Maurice seemed embarrassed, and added, politely bowing to Madeleine, “ A thousand pardons, I should have said, Mademoiselle de Vallerice.”

Madeleine’s dreamy eyes were cast in a liquid glance at the young man, as she answered in her sweetest tones, “ No apologies, Monsieur, I beg.”

Little Marie had been standing the while, gazing into the face of Madeleine, and as Maurice joined Julie near the window, engaging her in subdued conversation, the child timidly approached Madeleine, and asked, “ Do you feel better now, Mademoiselle ?” Madeleine was very fond of children, and never lost an opportunity to cultivate their acquaintance. She had not forgotten her own unhappy childhood.

She looked intently at the child, at the same time extending her arms :

“ Yes, I have quite recovered now, thank you. Come here, little one, what is your name ?”

Marie did not need a second invitation. She went at once to the fair visitor, but almost under a spell, for she did not once take her eyes from Madeleine's face.

This woman of the world, with her grand and stately appearance, her beautiful face, and polished manners, seemed to charm the child, for she had never beheld anything half so beautiful. Then again, she had never seen Julie, or her mother dress like that, for Madeleine was gowned in the very latest Paris fashion, a carriage dress of rich material.

But she answered, "My name is Marie Girard. I am called little Marie." Then her voice became strangely sad for one of her years, as she added, "Mamma says that is what my dear papa always called me."

Madeleine stroked the soft bright curls. "And does he not call you so still?"

"Oh! papa is not with us now," she replied; "they put him in a big prison when I was a little baby, and dear mamma cries all the time."

Madeleine was truly interested.

"Why did they put your papa in prison?" she asked. "Can the father of such a dear little girl be a criminal?"

"Oh! he is not a criminal. They said he stole money, but he did not, he is innocent. Don't you believe he is?"

Madeleine drew her closer as she answered

in a soothing voice. "Well, my dear, I hope so, for your sake."

Little Marie looked up into Madeleine's face for a moment, and slowly said, "Mademoiselle, they say that an actress is heartless, but I don't believe it, for I already love you very much."

Madeleine kissed the fair brow as she answered, "You flatter me, little one, but tell me, how came you to know I am an actress?"

"Oh! I heard them call your name. Will you tell me what an actress is? I asked mamma, but she could not tell me."

"Well, my dear," she replied, thoughtfully, "an actress is a woman, who takes up the burden of life, determined to pursue an art, which is an inspiration from God. One whose life is temptation, and admiration, but rarely love, at times triumph, but never tranquility. Sometimes they have harsh and unjust sentences passed upon them, but stage masks often cover faces, where care, and tears, have left their withering traces, and broken hearts often beat, beneath their gems and laces."

Maurice, who had overheard this explanation, was interested in the words and came forward.

She glanced up at his honest face, and a deep feeling of gratitude took possession of her heart, as she addressed him in a trembling voice :

"Monsieur de La Tour, I feel that you have indeed saved my life to-night ; how can I sufficiently thank you ?"

She rose, trembling as she spoke, at the same time extending her hand to Maurice. Her great brown eyes shone with love. Maurice took the proffered hand, and replied, "You can thank me most by not alluding to it again, Mademoiselle."

The coachman entered, respectfully informing Mademoiselle, that the carriage was in waiting, and by this time she should have arrived at the theatre.

"Very well, Jacques," and with a graceful wave of her hand, she turned again to Maurice, and in light tones, as if to disguise her true feeling, continued :

"Do you know, Monsieur, that although you were against me at the trial of the will case, I could not consider you my enemy, but looked forward to knowing you, as a true friend."

Maurice, it must be confessed, seemed quite embarrassed, but recovered his dignity, and answered :

"Mademoiselle, though you were not my client, I shall esteem your friendship just the same, and take this opportunity to inform you, that the decision of the lower court has been reversed, in favor of Mademoiselle Marteau."

She gazed at Maurice for a moment, as if

she failed to understand in full, the meaning of his words. Then suddenly her expression changed, a deep hatred shot from her eyes, which seemed like balls of fire, as she exclaimed :

“Reversed, and in favor of her? She who dragged me before the courts as a designing woman? I hate her!”

Maurice replied with marked politeness, “I regret exceedingly being the bearer of this unpleasant news—believe me.” His words had a magical effect upon her, for in a moment her expression changed, as if ashamed of her passionate outburst, she replied, “It is a great disappointment, Monsieur, I confess. Still you have lightened the burden of this very disagreeable news, by being yourself, the bearer. I do not blame you for working so assiduously in the interest of your client, and hope that henceforth, we will be friends.” She again held out her hand to him. As she turned to go, she continued :

“As a proof of my sincerity, I wish you to be my guest at dinner to-morrow.” As Maurice bowed, he answered, “Pardon me, Mademoiselle, it is impossible.”

“Impossible? And why is it impossible, Monsieur?” in a tone of surprise.

“You will readily understand when I tell you, that this young lady here,” and he held

out his hand to Julie, who had approached quite near, "is Julie Marteau, and my affianced wife!"

He turned Julie gently aside, as if to infer that further interview was at an end. Madeleine gave a violent start. She clutched her hands convulsively, and, turning away, hissed in an undertone :

"Julie Marteau his affianced wife! She has already robbed me of the fortune left me by her uncle, and now she crosses my path, to rob me of the only man I shall ever love."

Then a determined light shot from her eyes, her lips seemed to tighten as she continued, "She shall not do it. I will win him from her, I swear it."

She turned abruptly, and, with a haughty, and defiant look at Julie, said, "Yes, I understand," then bowing coldly, "with your permission, I will take my leave. Good evening."

Her look of hatred, and bitterness, could not be concealed, as she swept toward the door. She had nearly reached it, when Marie, seeing she was about to leave, ran after her, holding out her little arms, saying, "Mademoiselle, won't you kiss me before you go?"

"Certainly, my child, good-night." She stooped and kissed the little one, and turned to go, but Marie still clung to her, saying, "Don't forget to pray for my dear papa, who is in

prison, and for good Mademoiselle Julie, who is so kind to poor mamma, and me."

The pleading tones, her angelic upturned face, seemed to touch the heart of Madeleine. She clasped the child impulsively, and, imprinting a kiss upon the pale face, said, "God bless you, little darling," and then with a hurried "Good-night" to Maurice, who had advanced to the door, she passed hurriedly out.

Could one read the heart of this impulsive creature, one would see there imprinted the image of a poor little child, whose simple "Kiss me before you go," had changed the current of her whole life.

CHAPTER VII.

A HAPPY HOME.

JULIE MARTEAU went to the window, and watched Madeleine as she entered her carriage, and was driven away. A look of deep admiration was on her bright face, as she said :

"So that is Madeleine de Vallerice, of whom I have heard so much? She is certainly a very beautiful woman," turning to Maurice, "tell me more about her, Maurice. I do wish you or papa would take me to see her at the theatre."

Maurice did not wish to continue the conversation about Madeleine, and tried to turn it by saying, "Sometime I will take you there. But you don't seem much pleased to see me," with a solemn look.

Julie looked at him roguishly, and pouted her lips as if to be kissed. He did not require a second invitation, but sprang to her side. Before he had time to reach her, she darted away with a merry laugh, saying, "You will have to catch me first."

Here the gate bell was heard, and she ran to the door, opened it, exclaiming joyfully,

"Here is papa now." She was soon half way down the gravel walk in the arms of her father.

"Ah! Julie, my darling, give me a kiss, and another, and another." In this way they reached the porch, and came into the room. As he entered, he greeted Christine, who was hurriedly arranging the dinner on the table:

"Christine, how are you? Maurice, you are here before me," stretching out his hand, which was met with a hearty grasp and a shake. "Who was it that drove away as I entered?" Julie answered quickly, it being a piece of unusual news she had to impart:

"That was Madeleine de Vallerice. She came near meeting with a terrible accident, and, but for the bravery of Maurice, might have been killed."

The old Captain was much astonished, exclaiming, "Madeleine de Vallerice! Was she hurt?"

"No, Captain, only frightened," replied Maurice. Then, wishing to change the subject, he added, "But you are late. I expected you would be here before me."

"Yes," he replied, "that affair of which I spoke took longer than I expected, besides, that clerk of yours detained me this afternoon at your office."

In the meantime all had been busy, thinking of the old Captain's comfort. Christine had

brought his dressing gown, which she gave to Julie, who assisted her father to put it on. He took care to take a large old fashioned red leather pocket-book from the inside pocket of his coat, and transfer it inside his waistcoat, unnoticed by Julie, and to button his gown so as to conceal it.

Little Marie had scampered off to get his slippers, which, it will be remembered, in her fright she had dropped on the stairs, upon encountering Chopard.

Each one vied with the other to render some service, for they all dearly loved the old man. Marie, having brought the slippers, now scampered off again to find the boot-jack, which she placed in front of the Captain's chair, but, instead of using it, he no sooner seated himself than the little one tried, with all her might, to pull off his boots. In this attempt she fell to the floor, which caused no end of merriment.

Christine had brought extra lights, and placed the dinner steaming hot upon the table. The savory fumes reached the old Captain's nostrils, and he, exclaiming, "That's right, Christine, that long walk I took has made me as hungry as a wolf," sat down to the feast. After he had served Maurice, Julie and little Marie,—for he had insisted that the child should be one of the family party, he com-

menced eating with a right good will, occasionally pouring out wine, and also filling Maurice's glass.

Dinner over, Marie took her accustomed seat upon the old Captain's knee. She sat there, fondling the bushy gray hair, and twisting the heavy gray mustache of the old sailor. The lovers were seated where their eyes could meet, and convey more than words. Christine was sewing near a table in the back of the room.

This simple picture of home life was truly refreshing. The old man with the happiness of knowing what joy was in store for his beloved daughter; Maurice and Julie happy in each other's love, and no thought beyond the present.

Only one heart in that little group was heavy and sad,—Christine's. For her, no bright future stretched out. The husband she so dearly loved, the father of her child, was suffering, how could she be happy? Still she tried to smile, she fought hard to assume a resignation which she could not feel, for did she not owe it to those good kind people, who had done so much for her.

The short silence was broken by Julie, who suddenly exclaimed, "Papa, I shall scold you severely for leaving me alone so much of late; this evening I was so frightened, I shall never forget it."

"Frightened! You, the daughter of an old veteran. What frightened you? Have you seen a mouse?" And the old Captain threw back his head and laughed merrily.

"No, Papa, a man."

A look of terror passed over the young girl's face, as she recalled the experience of a few hours earlier.

The old Captain noticed her expression, but he thought best to treat it lightly and replied:

"A man?"

He laughed again, but it was without the merry ring usually heard from the old soldier. Julie continued:

"Yes, he called here saying he had an appointment with you, but after waiting a short time departed, saying he could stay no longer."

The Captain, with a thoughtful look, said, "Oh! I forgot, it must have been Monsieur Bonnin, a house agent, yet he made no mention of having been here, when I saw him a short time ago before my arrival home." Then he added, with a merry twinkle in his clear, gray eyes, "I have been thinking that this house will be too small for us when you and Maurice are married." Here Julie turned away to hide the blush which suffused her fair face. "And I have concluded to take another in a more fashionable quarter. Still, I cannot see what there is in a white-haired man to frighten you."

Julie remarked quickly and with animation, "But this man was not white-haired; his hair and beard were black."

"Oh! perhaps M. Bonnin sent his clerk." Turning to Christine he demanded, "Was he short?"

Christine laid aside the needlework upon which she was engaged, and coming forward respectfully answered:

"No, Monsieur, tall, and had such an evil-looking countenance that Mademoiselle Julie and I went into the garden while he waited."

Little Marie, still seated on the Captain's knee, turned to the old man as if suddenly remembering her fright, and said excitedly:

"Yes, yes, I saw him too, Captain. I ran upstairs to get your slippers—just as I came out to go down stairs he saw me. Oh! he looked at me as if he was going to kill me, and I ran away again."

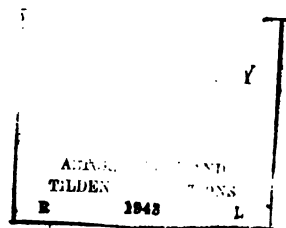
Maurice seemed more than interested as he exclaimed thoughtfully, "Who could it have been to frighten the child so?"

"Ah! well," said the Captain, "it is of little consequence now, for I have already secured a house, and to-morrow we will all go and look at it."

Christine, assured by her young mistress that she might retire, called to Marie, "Come, my darling, you must go to bed now."



A Happy Home.—"Yes, yes, I saw him too, Captain!"



The child impulsively threw her arms around the old man's neck and imprinted a loud kiss first on one cheek and then on the other; then running to Julie, then to Maurice, she served them both the same, saying, "Good-night." She was all brightness again, the dark thought that had clouded her face but a moment before had vanished,—it was forgotten.

The old Captain watched the little one's every move and action, and his face glowed as he heartily remarked, "God bless the child; I believe she has brought us all good luck!" Then, observing a look of unusual sadness on the features of Christine, he exclaimed, "Cheer up, Christine, who knows but what something may yet be done for somebody's release; money has power to open even iron doors."

Christine gave him a look of deep gratitude, as she fervently answered, "Oh! thank you, Captain, thank you." Turning to the little one at the foot of the stairs, she continued, "Now, my darling, mamma has something to do in the kitchen, you go upstairs, say your evening prayers, prepare for bed, I will be up in a little while." The Captain turned to the table and poured out two glasses of wine, one of which he passed to Maurice.

When Marie reached the landing of the stairs she turned and said to her mother, "Don't stay long, mamma dear. If you do,

I will come for you." Kissing her hand to all with a merry, "Good-night, everybody," she danced, rather than walked, out of sight.

Christine went into the kitchen. Julie had evidently been waiting with impatience, for Christine had scarcely closed the door, when she hurriedly exclaimed, "Papa, you cannot conceal your thoughts from me any longer, there is something going on, you have a surprise for me, what is it?"

The time had come! At last the kind-hearted, genial old father, could unburden the great secret he had kept so long. His hour of triumph was at hand.

With a roguish twinkle in his honest eyes he exclaimed, with a wink at Maurice:

"Well, yes, my darling, I have a little surprise," at the same time adjusting his glasses. In a somewhat teasing tone he continued, "What would my little girl give to know?"

"Oh! Papa, do not keep me in suspense, tell me what it is!"

Maurice, who had been enjoying the scene immensely, now came to the aid of his sweetheart, who sent an appealing look toward him.

"Yes, Captain, tell her what it is."

There was a few moments of anxious waiting on the part of Julie, while the old

Captain unbuttoned his dressing-gown, and drew forth the pocket-book, opened it, and took out a handful of crisp bank notes. Throwing them on the table before his beloved child, he exclaimed in a tone of triumph :

“ Well, there, that is what it is.”

Julie’s look of expectancy turned to that of utter astonishment, as she exclaimed :

“ But, I do not understand.”

The old Captain rubbed his hands in exultant glee, as he said :

“ It is very simple, thanks to the advice and able efforts of our friend here,” with a nod to Maurice. “ We appealed the case of your uncle’s will, which this time was decided in our favor, and Maurice paid me this afternoon in your name five hundred thousand francs.”

If Julie was astonished before, she was now dumbfounded. She gazed from her father to her lover for some seconds, (the two gentlemen enjoying every change of the sweet face before them). She finally found voice, and at the same time action. She was by her father’s side, throwing her arms about his neck, exclaiming :

“ Oh ! Papa, darling papa, and to think that I have been scolding you all this time, while you were thinking only of my happiness and welfare.”

The overjoyed father returned all the kisses of his dear child, as he said :

"But we must not forget Maurice, to whom we owe all this grand, good fortune."

"Forget him!" she exclaimed, "never—never!" and going to him, she threw her arms about his neck with the impulsiveness of a child, murmuring, "Maurice! dear, dear Maurice."

I will not attempt to describe the feelings of that father, the two young lovers, or the bright visions of the future that spread out before them in such glowing hues. As for Julie, she did not think, she only knew that she was happy.

The father forgot all the troubles of the past, in this one supremely happy hour, for it meant so much for his darling child, whom he idolized. He brushed a tear of joy from his cheek, as he turned from the happy lovers, exclaiming:

"I am so happy to-night, that I feel like asking the whole world to take a glass of wine with me," and again he filled the two glasses full to the brim.

Maurice was much moved, as he also shared in the happiness, for was he not one of them; the accepted husband of the pure young girl? He rose and came forward, saying heartily, "That is exactly how I feel." They clinked their glasses and drank to the

good health, and fortune of the Captain's daughter, who was standing radiantly beautiful before them,—for happiness brings beauty. There was not a happier home in all the land.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HAND OF THE ASSASSIN.

ON this eventful night, when happiness reigned supreme for the master of Ivy Villa and his charming daughter, it was well for them that they could not read the future. It was a kind Providence that had ordained it so. Oh! ye who seek to penetrate the depths of what lies before you, take heed, for God in his great wisdom has drawn the veil, which, perhaps, may be rudely torn aside by the "Angel of Death."

Julie in her happiness turned to her lover, and with emotion said, "Oh! Maurice, I can never repay you for your kindness."

The old Captain eyed them and replied, "Oh! yes you can, Julie, by naming the happy day when you will become his wife."

Julie blushed, and her eyes dropped as she exclaimed, "Oh! Papa, Maurice!"

The Captain brushed away a tear as he went on, "There, there, it is all settled now, and I am a happy, silly old fool!" He turned to Maurice, in a more serious tone, "Maurice, I will get those papers you require, so

you can take them along, and have them in the morning."

He went upstairs, and as he reached the landing said, "And, Maurice, while I am gone, you can tell Julie all about the lawsuit, hem! hem!" With a wink, and motion of his right hand toward Julie, he disappeared into his own room, with a soft merry chuckle.

Maurice took Julie by the hand, and led her to a settee near the window overlooking the garden, and, seating himself beside her, said in low, thoughtful tones, "Julie, I have been thinking very seriously to-day, of—of—" he hesitated as if uncertain how to proceed.

Julie saw his embarrassment and quickly inquired, "Of what, Maurice?"

"Now that you are rich, you may want more time to reflect."

Julie at once caught his meaning and replied, "Is not my life yours? Excepting my father, yours was the first hand stretched out to me in kindness, yours the first voice that spoke to me in pity, therefore, I love you, yet I would never have told you so, had you not bade me confess it. I gave myself entirely to you. Your love is my fortune."

He pressed her tiny hands impulsively, as he exclaimed, "Bless you, my darling! Your love will enclose me in a new world, where I shall see nothing but the heaven of your eyes,

hear nothing but the throbbing of our hearts."

He drew from his pocket a small box, opened it, and took from it a ring, consisting of one solitaire diamond, of great value and brilliancy. As he laid it on the pretty pink palm, she made an exclamation of joyous surprise, and, lifting it, her eyes caught the inscription, "*Mizpah.*" As she murmured the word, he took the ring and, placing it on the third finger of her left hand, said :

"The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another," then, looking into the beautiful blue eyes that were radiant with love for him alone; he added :

"Now, dearest, will you name the happy day?" She did not drop her eyes, she did not hesitate for a moment, but answered frankly, "In ten days you may call me yours."

He was overjoyed, "In ten days, my beloved? Then we shall live in each other's love. Your dear father shall never leave us. May Heaven protect our happiness, my dearest Julie, Angel of Light."

He rose as he spoke, and, drawing her close to his heart, pressed a kiss on her beautiful lips. A seal of love never to be broken, through all the bitter changes that were to come.

As they stood there clasped in each other's

arms, the bright rays of the moon high up in the Heavens, cast their shimmering gleams through the casement, and, although the shadows were close, the flood of light surrounding the lovers gave hope of happiness in store.

They were still in their embrace, when the Captain re-entered from his room up stairs, and, standing on the landing, surveyed the happy couple. He did not come down at once, but gave a nod of approval and satisfaction. After one or two loud forced coughs, he quickly turned his back and looked up to the ceiling.

Maurice did not start, but gently disengaged Julie. As he turned to the Captain the old man said in a voice of stern command :

“ Judgment for the plaintiff.” Breaking into a merry laugh he came down the stairs, with a knowing look at Maurice, and then at Julie. “ You have told her all about the case, I see?” Julie seemed confused. “ There, there, never mind me, I’ve been in the same boat myself.”

Seeing the look of surprise they exchanged, he gave Maurice a jolly punch in the side, and claspng Julie in his arms said, by way of explanation, “ Why, with your mother, to be sure.”

Then taking the two and joining their hands he raised his eyes to Heaven, and, with reverential fervor, exclaimed : “ Heaven bless

you, my children, may you never be less happy than you are at this moment."

Maurice, seeing that it was near ten o'clock, went to the rack, and, taking his hat, extended his hand to the old man, "Good-night, Captain."

"Good-night, my son," he took his hand, "I will go with you and lock the garden gate," preceding him to the door and out, as Maurice stopped to press once more a kiss on the sweet lips of his promised bride, and with a loving, "Good-night," he followed the old man out. Julie stood at the door looking after them.

The old Captain was heard saying, "Don't forget to come early to-morrow, and we will all go and look at the new house." As he re-entered the room, he locked the door with his key which hung on a ring with others, and which he replaced in his pocket. Just then the little clock chimed out the hour of ten. "I have something to say to you, Julie, come sit down."

He seated himself beside the table. Julie sat on a footstool at his feet, gazing up into her father's face.

"Yes, papa," lovingly stroking his hands.

"This money," he continued, "this money is your dowry, and I thank God that you are now provided for, as my pension dies with me."

The pocket-book, which he had for a moment withdrawn while speaking, he replaced in his dressing-gown pocket.

As he spoke these words, Julie shuddered, and, burying her head in his lap, said, "Don't speak of death, papa, it fills me with such a strange unhappy feeling."

"Why not," resumed her father, "I am getting old and feeble; my time is fast approaching. Now that your future is assured, even though death should come to me to-night, I feel that I am ready."

He rose as he spoke, and lighted two candles, and bidding her good-night opened the door. She passed into her room with a sweet "Good-night, papa."

He took up the remaining candle from the table and approached the stairs. He stopped, and looked toward Julie's room with an anxious expression. He then went to the door leading into the garden, tried it, to make sure it was securely locked. He started again to Julie's door, as if reluctant to leave her, but suddenly braced himself with an air, as if to say, "What an old fool I am." Then, placing his disengaged hand over where the pocket-book was concealed, he mounted the stairs, a smile of satisfaction overspreading his genial face.

On reaching the landing, he paused, looked

toward his daughter's room, and speaking aloud said, "To-morrow begins a new, and happy day." And with a beaming happy face he entered his room.

Contrary to his usual custom, instead of retiring at once, he threw himself upon the bed to think over the events of the day. He was soon wrapped in slumber.

An hour passed slowly, slowly for those who were lurking in the shadows of the old garden wall.

Two men, after Maurice had said good-night, entered through the garden gate, by means of a key, that one of them had taken a few hours before. There was a fiendish look on the features of the elder man; his eyes shone with a fire, that is at times seen to flash from the eyes of a serpent. His hands and fingers moved convulsively, as his conversation changed.

We need not go into detailed description of these two fiends, for they were Chopard and Gonzago.

One would never recognize the younger man. He wore a full beard, and was dressed in a workman's blouse, and soft hat, which he wore well over his face.

Their conversation was subdued and ran about as follows:

"Why did you bring me here, and insist upon my wearing this disguise?"

"That in case you are seen you will be taken for Paul Girard, a man who is under police surveillance, and serving time at Orleans. He made a visit to his wife here to-night, who is the servant of the old Captain."

"But why do you wish to make me your accomplice?"

"Because I want to gain possession of you body and soul," hissed Chopard. "I know that you love my daughter, it is for that reason that I want to enrich you."

At the mention of Madeleine, Gonzago started, and exclaimed passionately, "But she does not love me, you have heard her say so, and also declare she would never marry me."

Chopard clutched him by the arm angrily, "Fool! I have already told her that she must marry you. I will leave Paris to-morrow, and Madeleine must have a protector. I have written a letter commanding obedience, there is no doubt she will obey me, you have but to follow my instructions."

He listened for a while to make sure that all was quiet, and then continued, "I think we may safely enter now, everything is as quiet as a tomb. Keep by me." They proceeded stealthily to the porch, reached the door, unlocked it, listened, then crept softly into the room.

Gonzago was trembling from head to foot, as he whispered :

"How dark it is in here."

"Never mind that, the moon streaming in through the garden window is all the light I require."

The moon shone even brighter now, than a short time before, when the innocent young lovers stood almost on the same spot. Perhaps it was in contrast to the minds, and desires of these two human brutes, to the pure thoughts, and clear conscience of the young couple.

Again the rays flooded the entire room, the shadows lurking near the stairs, or behind some article of furniture, giving a weird, and almost awful appearance, that seemed in keeping with foul deeds. There is no joy that is not followed sooner or later by sorrow. The brighter the sun shines, the clearer the moon beams, the darker and deeper the shadows. This is our destiny throughout our pilgrimage here. Only in Eternity shines perpetual light, reigns supreme and lasting joys.

Chopard suddenly seized Gonzago by the shoulders, and forced him to his knees, hissing into his terrified, upturned face :

"Swear to keep my secret, swear it on your life!" Gonzago, trembling from head to foot at this unexpected outbreak, answered in a hoarse whisper :

"I swear it on my life," then he added with

quick thought, "I swear it by my love for Madeleine!" Chopard immediately released his hold as if by magic.

"Good! Now then to work!" He crept stealthily to the shadow near the stairs, and proceeded to remove his shoes, whispering to Gonzago:

"The stairs creak, I will mount upon your shoulders." Gonzago was thoroughly frightened; it was easy to see he had not the iron nerve and will of the older man.

He whispered to Chopard, "Remember, no violence." Chopard replied with a wicked, sinister look, "No, I will not even wake him."

The next minute his great burly frame was upon the shoulders of the younger man. He had just reached the landing, when a loud scream issued from the direction of the room occupied by Julie.

With a bound Chopard was down the stairs, and, catching the terrified form of Gonzago, drew him into the recess under the stairs, which served as a cupboard.

They had barely time to secrete themselves, when the old Captain emerged from his room, and appeared on the landing carrying the candle in his hand. He raised the light above his head and surveyed the room, speaking aloud to himself, as he descended the stairs:

"I am sure I heard Julie scream. I must see her. Poor child, she seemed very nervous to-night."

He reached the table, set the candlestick down, and was about to proceed to his daughter's door, when heavy hands were laid upon him, and in an instant he was whirled around, a pair of hands encircled his throat, the tips of the fingers meeting behind, at the nape of the neck, the thumbs joined in front upon the upper part of the windpipe, on a level with the larynx.

The poor victim was forced to the floor in full length upon his back. He was taken so completely by surprise, that before he could make an outcry, or even a struggle, the breath had left the body, and he lay with eyes staring, and the foam oozing from beneath his heavy white mustache.

The noble whole-souled old Captain, beloved by all, now lay upon the floor, dead, where not two hours before he had been the happiest of happy fathers.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHILD WITNESS.

WHEN little Marie bade the family good-night, she did not forget her doll. She quietly sat down and removed its clothes, replacing them with a long *robe de nuit*, which Christine had made, all the time talking, for she was the little mother.

When she had finished her usual prayers for all, she asked the good God to bless the beautiful lady, for in the eyes of this innocent, Madeleine de Vallerice was the most beautiful being she had ever seen. She took her dolly—Julie, as she had named it—and went to bed, not to sleep, as she told dolly, but to wait for mamma, but she was soon wrapped in the sweet slumber that innocence only knows.

She was awakened by the scream, and by the movement of the Captain, and opening her eyes saw that the lamp was still burning. Looking about the room, and not seeing her mother, she could not understand it all, till at last she recalled that her mamma had work to finish in the kitchen,

"I will go and get her," the little one murmured, and creeping quietly out of bed, so not to disturb dolly, she softly opened the door, and stole along the hall to the landing, just as Chopard laid his hands upon the old Captain.

She stood speechless and horrified. The old Captain lay upon the carpet with Chopard bending over him, saying to Gonzago, "Come here, you coward, bring the chloroform!"

Gonzago emerged from his place of concealment. He took a handkerchief from his pocket, which he saturated with the contents of a small bottle, approached, and placed it over the mouth and nostrils of the prostrate Captain.

"Now take the pocket-book and be gone," commanded the elder man.

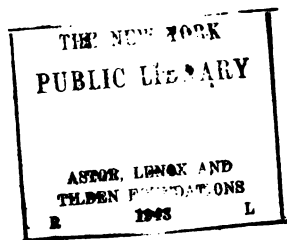
Gonzago tremblingly tore open the dressing-gown, and hastily abstracted the pocket-book containing the notes, which he quickly secreted underneath the blouse he wore. The soldiers were now heard approaching on their rounds.

Both men started violently, Chopard exclaiming quickly, as he released his hands from his victim's throat, "Go, make good your escape, but remember my words."

The noise of the soldiers, as they came nearer, and the action of the two excited men,



“Come here, you coward; bring the chloroform.”



seemed to rouse Marie from her lethargy, for she cried out at the top of her voice :

"Mamma, mamma, help, help!" Gonzago started to run, and in his hurry came near going into the kitchen. Seeing his mistake, he made a dart for the door leading into the garden. By this time the child had reached her own room. Chopard hissed under his breath :

"Curse that youngster! If the soldiers hear her I am lost."

He made a bound for the handkerchief that covered the face of his victim; hurriedly catching it, he held it for an instant over the candle, then cast it burning into the fireplace, where it was soon consumed, leaving nothing but a small heap of white ashes upon the few smouldering coals. He blew out the light, and secreted himself in the shadows—for the bright rays of the moon again flooded the room. Christine Girard entered from the kitchen, hurriedly crossed the room, ran up the stairs and disappeared, muttering to herself :

"I thought I heard Marie's cries for help, could anything have happened to her?"

Chopard's impulse, under any other circumstances, would have been to rush upon her, but his only concern now was for his own safety. His brain was at work, and his thoughts flew

quicker than his actions. He hurriedly pulled on his Congress gaiters, and was about to make a bold dash into the garden, when the loud report of two shots was heard. With a muttered curse he sprang to the door, as if to make good his escape. He reached the porch, or portico, and, realizing that he would rush into the arms of the soldiers if he attempted to pursue his flight, made a quick turn, and facing, as if to re-enter the room, threw himself violently down, allowing his head to come in direct contact with the corner of the old-fashioned iron boot scraper.

The object of this violent move, could only be conceived in the brain of this human fiend for one purpose. His desire to obtain the money was accomplished. He knew that his daughter would enjoy the spoils, she would be rich, so what cared he for pain.

No sooner had he cast himself in a prostrate position, than Christine rushed down the stairs with the child clasped tightly in her arms. Drawing the curtains, she threw open the window, and cried aloud for help.

Julie, we remember, was in a nervous state when she retired to rest. The glad tidings of good fortune, the happiness of love, and so much bright anticipation for the future, could not wholly dispel the evil impression made upon her by the mysterious visitor of the

evening. No sooner was she alone in her own chamber, than the evil face of the man, with its dark cynical look rose before her. Her impulse was to join her father, and confess her fears, but had he not said, "She was the daughter of an old veteran?" He would only smile at her, so she tried to reconcile herself with the thought, that the night would soon pass, and she would only laugh at her own nervousness in the bright light of the morning.

She retired to rest, but only to be haunted by the same villainous face, and in her dream to cry out. It was this same cry that had startled the two men, as we have already seen.

She struggled in terrible agony, as only those who have experienced a dreadful dream can realize. She was finally aroused by the outcry. Springing from her bed, she determined to see her father at once, and ascertain without doubt, that all was well with him. She had hastily lighted the candle, threw on a *robe de chambre*, thrust her tiny feet into slippers, when she became aware that there was a commotion of some sort. She thought of fire; then the cries of Christine for help reached her. She seized the candle, and rushed from her room crying out, "Father! father! what is the trouble?"

She was about to rush to her father's apart-

ment, when her eyes fell in horror upon his prostrate form.

In an instant she was on her knees by his side, imploring him to speak to her, to answer her. She called him by every endearing name known to a loving child for a fond, indulgent parent. She laid her hand over his heart ; a startled look shot from her eyes, her breath came quick and heavy. She leaned over and placed her ear close, but that loving heart had ceased its throbbing. With one heart-rending sob she cried out :

“ My God, he is dead ! ” and fell in a swoon across the lifeless body.

As the soldiers were making their rounds at eleven o'clock, and were on their way back to the fortifications, their attention was attracted by faint cries for help. A dark object was seen in the moonlight, to emerge from the garden gate of Ivy Villa, and move stealthily in the shadows of the garden wall. The soldiers were at some little distance, but the captain, being satisfied it was the figure of a man, ordered a halt in a loud tone.

Quick as a flash the figure darted across the Boulevard, and turned into the Rue du Docteur, but not before two shots were discharged, which brought two policemen in haste, who immediately pursued the fugitive.

Here a woman's voice broke the stillness of

the night with the horrifying cry of "Murder! Murder! Help! Help!" There was no further doubt this time from whence the sounds issued. The order was given by the Captain to proceed at once, and they hurriedly entered the gate, for they were now directly in front of Ivy Villa.

Upon reaching the porch they found the prostrate form of Chopard. Two of the soldiers stooped and raised it, only to find that he was nearly unconscious from a deep wound on the head.

Chopard had sustained an injury, as we have already seen, by his own act, but he was not unconscious by any means. He was simply shamming. He allowed himself to be dragged into the room, to the very side of his victim, and confronted by the little child, who had been a witness, Christine, and the daughter, who had met him face to face only a few hours before.

Chopard was accused by Marie as the murderer of Captain Marteau, and he was taken into custody to await an investigation, although he stoutly protested his innocence.

Julie was revived after some trouble, but refused to believe that her father was dead. She could not realize that he whom she had left but a short time before, so strong, and happy, was now lifeless clay.

"It is impossible," she cried. "Save him! I implore! I beseech you to save him!"

In her terrible grief she clung to the Doctor, and to satisfy her he resumed his examination. When he had finished he raised his head, and, taking her hand in his, in a fatherly manner, exclaimed, "You see I am not mistaken, my child, but you must have courage."

She suddenly straightened herself up, and, looking him in the eyes, demanded, "If he is dead, of what did he die?"

The old Doctor gazed at the bereaved daughter and shook his head. "From appearances, my child, it is a stroke of apoplexy," but he stammered rather than spoke, for he was compelled to reply.

Julie was completely overwhelmed. She sank on her knees again beside her dead father; she gazed with all her eyes, with her whole soul, anxiously, feverishly, madly.

Christine understood the Doctor when he told Julie that her father had died of apoplexy. She dreaded the time when her poor, young mistress should learn the truth, which alas, must come too soon.

A bustle and commotion now filled the room. The commissary of police, followed by his secretary and an agent, entered.

The Doctor quickly approached the commissary, and speaking in low, hurried tones,

"I sent for you, Monsieur, because I am sure a crime has been committed. The old man has most certainly been murdered."

"Are you sure of that?" demanded the commissary, stifling an exclamation.

"Absolutely certain," replied the Doctor.

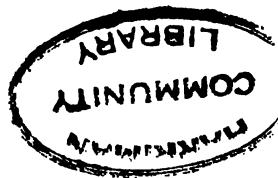
At this moment his eyes fell upon the still kneeling form of Julie.

"Excuse me, Monsieur," he added to the commissary, "I will presently rejoin you, and tell you all I know about the case."

He approached Julie, and taking her gently by both arms, lifted her to her feet, and signaled for Christine, who stood gazing in pity, with little Marie still clinging to her.

"Where is the apartment of your mistress?" he asked. Christine moved toward the door of Julie's room. The Doctor half led, half carried the young girl. She did not resist, but submitted as if her will and mind were utterly gone; her head was turned, and her eyes were fixed upon the lifeless body of her father.

The Doctor gave her into the arms of the attendant, and, as the door closed upon them, returned to the commissary.



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CHAPTER X.

THE MISSING POCKET-BOOK.

ON leaving his sweetheart and her father, Maurice de La Tour took the Rue du Docteur, and soon reached Avenue de Clichy. He walked briskly and with a light bound, which seemed to keep pace with the wild beating of his heart. He was thinking of Julie, and that in ten short days, she would be his—his for life. Oh! what happiness he felt. He pinched himself to make sure he was not in a delightful dream.

In the midst of his happiness, he could not help wondering who the strange visitor could have been, since it was not the house agent.

He reached his office on the Rue Neuve des Petits, for it was here that he also lived.

On entering his apartment, he sat for a short time looking over the papers given him by the Captain. It was his custom to rise quite early each morning, and take a long walk before breakfast, so he lost no time in retiring. He awaited the morrow, with the impatience of a child, for was he not to go with his betrothed and her father to see the home,

where so soon they were to commence life together? It did not seem that he had slept long, when he was awakened by a messenger in great haste, the messenger was none other than Christine Girard, who, after administering a draught to her dear young mistress, which had been prescribed by the Doctor, made all haste to summon Monsieur de La Tour.

Before leaving the house, however, she was obliged to explain her errand to Monsieur Gaston, who had taken charge of the place, while waiting the arrival of the magistrate. Monsieur Gaston gave his consent to her leaving the house, but detailed Monsieur Partout, one of his most trusty agents to go as her escort.

A murder had been committed, and a strict watch must be kept on the movement of all, as all were under suspicion, and most of all Christine Girard.

Maurice de La Tour was horrified, and believed himself the victim of some dreadful nightmare. He was soon with Christine and Partout before the iron gate, from whence he had parted but a short time before, with the Captain's cheery voice still ringing in his ear, as he bade him good-night, and importuned him to come early in the morning.

Even at this time, a crowd was standing in front of the gate talking of the crime, and commenting in subdued tones. Every one



was eager to enter the dwelling which had suddenly become famous, but the authority of the police on guard had been respected, and even the most curious had not protested against it.

Astonished at the sight of the throng, Maurice was now fully awakened to the fact that the sad news was too true. He was allowed to enter, followed by Christine and Partout.

Maurice's first impulse was to rush to the side of his fiancée, but Christine soon ascertained that she was still sleeping.

It was pitiful to see the emotion of Maurice, when he beheld the form of Captain Marteau. He loved the old Captain as a father, and looked forward to calling him so. The strong muscular form of the young man trembled with grief. He did not try to suppress his tears, for it is not unmanly to weep, and the paroxysm over, he would be able to think.

Monsieur Gaston and his followers, accustomed as they were to varied scenes, bowed their heads in silence, for they had learned of the relationship that was soon to exist between the young man, and his dear old friend. Maurice finally controlled his feelings, and, turning to the physician who had remained, he asked, "Your belief is that he was strangled?"

"Look!" replied the Doctor, pointing to the body, "there are every signs of strangula-

tion. But what never deceives us, are these little red dots on the face, and also on the white of the eyes. Do you see?"

"I see," replied Maurice, "but the old Captain was very strong for a man of his years. He would be likely to defend himself."

"He could not defend himself," urged the Doctor. "It is evident that he was suddenly surprised from behind, and his throat held as in a vise. Before he could make a struggle, he was suffocated."

"Ah!" said M. Gaston, "in your opinion the deed was effected by the hands."

"Certainly, are you not aware that this mode of strangling is most common?"

The Doctor then went into a detailed account of this mode of murder. The commissioner had examined the premises, and, knowing the Captain by reputation, that he was respected by all, and lived on a limited income, asked himself, what motive could have prompted the murder. He said when the old physician had finished his explanation:

"What enemy could this inoffensive old soldier have had, retired from the world as he was, and absorbed only in his parental love? Surely robbery was not the design."

Suddenly Maurice started. He had heard of the man being found on the threshold, of the accusation of the child, and he bethought

himself of the strange visitor of the previous afternoon.

He forthwith related the details of the visit, and also how he had paid the Captain 500,000 francs, which he had brought home in an old red pocket-book, and had shown to his daughter.

Gaston at once ordered a search to be made for the pocket-book, but to no avail. The Captain still wore the dressing-gown, in the pocket of which Maurice had seen him replace the notes. An examination disclosed the fact that the gown had been rudely opened, as one of the buttons was torn off and missing. A search was then instituted for the button. It had fallen to the floor. M. Gaston breathed more freely now. He was convinced that a crime had been committed.

We will not dwell upon the meeting of the lovers, of the anguish of the young girl, now thrown wholly on the mercy of the man, who was so soon to have been her husband.

Maurice respected her wild grief, and implored her to be brave for his sake, for was he not all to her now? He would be lover, husband, and father.

She learned that her father had been murdered, and the bank notes taken. They were speaking beside his dead body.

She rose and standing erect, her long brown hair unbound, her large blue eyes starting

with a feverish gaze, superb in her youth and despair, she turned to Maurice, and taking both his hands, exclaimed :

“I love you, Maurice, I will be brave for your sake, but I can never become your wife, until my father is avenged.”

She put her arms lovingly about his neck, and kissed him fervently. Then pressing her lips to the marble brow of her father, as if to seal the vow, she sank on her knees in prayer beside the dead, that was soon to be removed from her sight forever.

CHAPTER XI.

FALSELY ACCUSED.

DURING all this time Paul Girard sat in the little pantry whence Christine had led him. He lived over again his cruel wrongs. At every sound his poor heart beat fast with expectations of the patter of little feet, and the hope of hearing his child's voice.

Had she ventured within hearing, he would have forgotten everything, in his mad desire and longing to clasp her to his heart.

The hours passed so joyously for the old Captain, and the two young lovers, dragged wearily on for him, yet in one thing he was happy, he was near his poor, suffering wife.

After the child had gone to her room, as we have seen, Christine joined her husband, and they conversed in low, loving tones. A maddening desire seized him to see his child. They heard the Captain close the gate after Maurice had gone, and when he thought they had retired, he pleaded with his wife to see if Marie was sleeping, so that he might gaze once more on her dear face, and press her to his hungry heart.

He was still pleading with her, and there were evident signs of relenting, when the cry of the child for help reached their ears. They started from their seats. Christine could hardly restrain Paul from darting from the room.

She held him back, and, telling him to remain there until she returned, hurried from the kitchen, crossed the room, and disappeared up the stairs.

In the excitement which followed, she forgot that her husband was waiting for her. It was not till she was on her way to acquaint Maurice of the fearful disaster, that she thought of Paul.

"My God!" she cried aloud, and turned to run back, when Partout accosted her. "Well, my good woman, this trouble seems to have upset you."

It an instant Christine realized that to return would require an explanation, and what explanation could she give? She had no choice but to continue on her errand with the detective by her side, and trust in Providence that her husband would be safe.

Poor Christine, she did not imagine what awaited her. Paul had already feared that his absence was suspected, and in that case the police were notified.

They were aware that the servant of Captain

Marteau was the wife of a man who was serving time at Orleans, hence a watch was kept on Ivy Villa, thinking that sooner, or later, he would visit her there.

Immediately the alarm was given, and cries for help were heard, soldiers were at once stationed and surrounded the place. It would be impossible for any one to enter, or go forth without detection.

When Monsieur Gaston arrived, he at once despatched a messenger to police headquarters. A detachment was sent, arriving just after Christine and Partout had departed to bring Maurice.

A search of the house and gardens was ordered, and, in the pantry, Paul Girard was found.

He had heard the commotion, and knew that something unusual had happened, just what, he could not tell. He knew it would be folly to try to escape, so he settled down to await the outcome, in hopes that each moment his wife would return.

One of the officers advanced toward Girard, and looking him full in the face said, "You are Paul Girard, who has returned to Paris in direct violation of the law of surveillance; I arrest you."

Paul started back in utter amazement.

"No resistance, no noise, come with me."

"Very well," said Paul, submitting to his fate. "I will go with you, I was wrong to come here." As he started to leave the kitchen with the detective, he little knew the import of what he was to face.

The astonishment of Paul, as he beheld the body of the dead Captain lying upon the floor, beggars description, he started back aghast.

The detective approached Gaston, and a short conversation was carried on between them in low tones. Then Gaston turned to Paul, "Your name is Paul Girard?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"You were condemned for a term of five years for robbery; you served out your sentence in the house of correction at Clairvaux. This is correct, is it not?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Nevertheless, you have often left that city without permission, and come to Paris?"

"Only three or four times at most, Monsieur, and then only to see my poor wife, and hear from my child."

"If that was all, why did your wife not visit you at Orleans?"

"She is in service here, Monsieur, in this very house," replied Paul, "and we feared she might lose her situation."

"What brought you here to-night?"

"I received a letter from my wife, saying,

that our child had been ill, and I was anxious to learn if she was better."

"What time did you arrive here to-night?"

"About six-thirty, Monsieur. I was about to leave to catch the eight o'clock train, when I heard the police approaching, and, fearing I might be watched, I determined to wait for a later train, and report to the commissary in the morning. My wife secreted me in the kitchen, where I was found."

"Paul Girard, a crime has been committed here to-night," continued Gaston, "we already have one in custody, whom we believe to be one of the assassins. We also believe that man had an accomplice, and we have reason to accuse you, of being that accomplice in the murder of Captain Marteau!"

"Oh, my God! my God!" exclaimed Paul, without any attempt to defend himself.

"What have you to say in reply?"

"Nothing, Monsieur, nothing," he murmured despondently. "I am lost—lost, as I was before."

He was immediately ordered into custody, to await further investigation.

When Christine returned with Maurice and Partout, after having assured herself that Julie, and Marie, were still sleeping, she hastened to the kitchen.

Her surprise in finding that Paul had disap-

peared was intense, she did not know what had become of him, she dared not ask, for fear of causing him more trouble. She tried to console herself with the thought, that he had managed to get away in the excitement, and hoped to hear that he was safe at Orleans.

Alas! poor sorrowing wife, she did not know what the morrow would bring forth.

CHAPTER XII.

SURPRISES FOR MAURICE.

ON the day following the tragedy, Christine learned that her husband had been discovered and taken into custody, charged as being one of the accomplices, in the murder of her beloved employer, Captain Marteau.

We say one of the accomplices for the reason that, although Marie persisted in saying that there were but two men, one had killed the Captain, and the other had stolen the pocket-book, the conclusion was reached that there were more than two.

What gave rise to this was that, notwithstanding the fact that a thorough search of the premises were made for the pocket-book and the notes, not a trace of them could be found.

The two men, Chopard, and Paul Girard, were searched, but all to no avail. They had no time to make away with the spoils, which gave rise to the fact that there must have been a third party, and that was the man whom the soldiers had seen, and ordered to halt, and at whom they had fired.

The child said that the man who took the pocket-book, ran in the direction of the kitchen, which also strengthened a belief in a third party.

The reader will now understand that Gonzago had succeeded in escaping. Had Chopard likewise succeeded, nothing would have saved Paul Girard from being charged as the actual assassin.

In France the imagination is very vivid. Instead of seeing only the crime to be detected and punished, they consider the accused first of all, they explore his past, and when that past is compromising in its character, they condemn his present with the greatest possible faith, and sincerity. This is not only the case with the magistrates and judges, but especially is it so, with those who attend the court of Assizes, and the general reading public. They often declare a man guilty or innocent in advance according to his bearing, and what they have heard of his former life. Alas! then for poor Girard! What mercy could he expect with his record, as a criminal under police surveillance? Worst of all, found secreted in the house of Captain Marteau. What defence could he make? He had none. He was too crushed in heart and spirit to attempt it, he seemed doomed.

When Christine heard of her husband's arrest,

and with what he had been charged, she was stunned. She could utter no protest or complaint, the shock was too sudden.

She pressed Marie to her heart in calm despair, and implored only that the fatal news be kept from her child.

Monsieur Gaston was a man of the world, calm in manner, and accustomed to inspire fear, if not respect. He had witnessed many and varied scenes, but the appeal of this unfortunate woman seemed to touch him.

He gave immediate instructions to those around him, that no mention whatever should be made in the child's hearing of the part her father was supposed to have taken, in the fearful tragedy.

At the same time a sudden thought occurred to him, that the suppression of any knowledge of her father in connection with the crime might be made good use of, when the time of the trial came.

Thus it was that the child was kept in ignorance, and the terrible grief of her mother was supposed to be for dear old Captain Marteau, whom they had learned to love so dearly.

Poor Christine did not know that she also was under suspicion, that she was under the constant eye of a detective, who had been detailed to watch her every movement.

The same key opened both the garden gate,

and the door of the house, there were two, one used by the Captain, which he carried on a key ring in his pocket, and was found there when a search was made. The other was used by Christine.

This key later had been used by the assassins as a means of entrance, and left in the lock on the outside of the door, where it was found. It was surmised that Paul Girard had secured the key from his wife, and, by some prearranged plan, had given it to his companions to enter the house, he being already there to await his share of the plunder.

It was supposed that Christine knew of the old Captain getting the money, of his bringing it home, that she communicated these facts to her husband, and perhaps had given him the key, never dreaming that murder would be the result, hence a spy was put to watch her.

The reader will remember that Christine was not in the room when the Captain exhibited the bank notes, she did not see them, or hear the conversation that followed between the father and his two beloved ones.

Having received a detailed description of the mysterious visitor, who had caused his sweetheart so much fear, Maurice was determined to call at the Palace of Justice and see the man, which circumstantial evidence had pointed so strongly as being the cause of so much sorrow.

Marie was most positive in declaring, that the man who had frightened her in the afternoon, was the man she saw kill poor Captain Marteau. Maurice made his way to prison. On account of his connection with the family, it was not hard for him to gain admittance.

It was about two o'clock when one of the two guards who accompanied him threw open the thick heavy doors, of one of the small cells, and he was ushered into the presence of Chopard.

Could he believe his eyes? Was it an apparition? Before him was his chief clerk, who rose as the door swung open.

Noting the astonishment of his employer, he exclaimed respectfully, "Ah! Monsieur, I am pleased to see you. I was sure you would be the first to believe in my innocence and come to my aid."

Maurice recovered himself at the first sound of Chopard's voice, and now wondered that he had not recognized this man by the vivid description given of him.

Yet it could not be possible that he would for a moment, suspect his chief clerk of complicity in a heinous crime.

Everything now flashed through his mind like magic. As he hesitated to speak, Chopard continued in his most polite and simple

manner, " You seem somewhat surprised to see me ? "

" I am surprised to see you, I confess," then adding, " I am very glad I came, as it establishes beyond a doubt your visit to Captain Marteau's house yesterday afternoon, which you will doubtless try to deny."

" Pardon me, Monsieur, on the contrary, I at once declare your suppositions correct. I did call at Captain Marteau's yesterday afternoon, but it was by a previous appointment."

" Appointment ! to what aim ? "

" With the very natural aim of discovering whether the house was what would suit me, as the Captain told me he was going to vacate it."

" It surprises me that you did not tell Mademoiselle Marteau who you were, and why you came to the house ? "

" Had I done so, I would have betrayed the confidence of Captain Marteau, who had earnestly requested me to keep the secret. You forget, Monsieur, that he intended to give his daughter a surprise on the morrow, and that the slightest indiscretion committed on my part would have prevented it. Believe me, I went to the house with the Captain's permission, but with a promise to be discreet."

This excuse might serve with some, but

Maurice was now thoroughly aroused, concerning the man who had been in his employ for more than two years. He remembered of late the mislaying of certain valuable papers, connected with the suit, which had at last been declared in favor of Mademoiselle Marteau.

He remembered also that on the day before, Chopard had detained the Captain in the office, a fact to which he had attached no importance at the time. He was the only one—being the confidential clerk—who knew that the money had been paid, and that it was too late to deposit it in the bank, and would necessarily have to be brought home.

Maurice was satisfied now that the man he had trusted so long was a villain of the deepest dye.

Chopard seemed to read his thoughts, for he asked, "Since I have been in your employ, I have given no cause for dissatisfaction, Monsieur?"

Maurice waived an answer, and asked, looking him straight in the eyes, "How do you explain your presence at Ivy Villa last night?"

We will here state that Chopard had occupied a room in a house on the Passage Choiseul, but as the trial was drawing to a close and he determined to have possession of the money which he had planned for his daughter, should a decision be rendered against him, he took

the precaution to move to a locality not too far from the old Captain's home.

Thus will be seen the craftiness, and foresight of this diabolical rascal, who had laid his plans ahead, and bided his time.

When he changed his abode from Passage Choiseul, which was quite convenient to Monsieur de La Tour's office where he was employed, to the Passage Boulay, he gave as an excuse, that being cooped up all day in an office, he wished the exercise, that the distance would necessarily afford him.

It was evident that Chopard had prepared well his mode of defence, which, during the months, and trial that followed, was not shaken in one instance.

When Maurice put the direct question, "How do you explain your visit to Ivy Villa last night?" he returned the scrutinizing look with a crafty cunning glance, which his quiet polite manner could not disguise, and replied in a very plausible tone:

"My dear Monsieur, you forget that I live not far from there. I beg to remind you, that I left the office before my accustomed hour yesterday, in order to keep my appointment with Captain Marteau. After dinner I returned to my work in the office, and finished the papers which you will find in the drawer of my desk.

"Having been shut up there in the office for a couple of hours, I felt like taking a long walk. I lighted a cigar, and began my promenade. Instead of taking the Avenue de Clichy, I turned into the Avenue de Saint Ouen, and continued until I reached the Boulevard Bessières. I was strolling homeward, when my attention was attracted by screams and cries for help issuing from Ivy Villa." Here he continued, looking at Maurice, "You know my sympathetic nature, Monsieur, the first impulse of my tender heart was to render assistance.

"The garden gate was opened, so I lost no time in entering. I had reached the porch leading to the house, when a man rushed out in great haste, striking me with such force as to throw me violently to the ground, or at the threshold almost. I received this blow, and became unconscious."

Here Chopard exhibited his head which he said had been attended to by the prison physician, and which was still causing him great pain. "I knew no more," he continued, "until I was rudely dragged by the soldiers, brought face to face with the dead man, lying upon the floor, and accused by a snivelling child, awakened from her sleep, who had no doubt seen the bogie man."

He assumed an air of injured innocence as

he narrated the last sentence. To Chopard's explanation Maurice listened attentively, but all the time there was a voice down deep in his heart, which cried out, "It is he! my murderer! the destroyer of our happiness!" it seemed more than the voice of conscience or reason, it seemed the very voice of his more than friend crying out for vengeance. It was this man's face that haunted his sweet-heart even in her sleep, and caused her to wake to a fearful realization of horror; it was this same face that haunted her still.

Maurice felt convinced that this narrow cell contained the murderer of Captain Marteau. He looked at the hands of the man, strange he had not noticed them during all the time he had known him. He muttered to himself, but audibly enough to be heard by the two guards who had remained during the interview :

"These are the very hands described by the physician." Chopard controlled his annoyance, for he had also heard the remark, but, not deeming it best to notice it, assumed a very sympathetic tone and expression, continuing, "It is very hard to be incarcerated or trying to be of service to one in trouble, and held here by the accusation of a simple child, to whom it would be impossible at night to have discerned features accurately.

"I doubt not, my dear Monsieur, that you will soon succeed in discovering the guilty party. I am the more desirous of this as I had a great regard for Captain Marteau personally."

"You have certainly proved it," said Maurice, sarcastically, looking him full in the face.

"Then, my dear Monsieur, you really believe me the assassin?" asked the chief clerk, without the slightest embarrassment.

"I am positive of it," replied Maurice, slowly and firmly.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LOVERS.

AFTER the funeral of Captain Marteau, Julie left Ivy Villa, to take up her residence on the Rue Truffaut, accompanied by the faithful Christine, and her child. She could not remain in the dwelling where she had received such a terrible blow.

At each glance cast around her, at each step taken in the house, or garden, some object would remind her of the father she so fondly loved. It would awaken memories very dear to her, but at the same time very sad, for he was removed from her now forever.

She took with her mementos that were dear, because he had given them to her. Although his income was limited, if she expressed a wish, and it was within his power, he surprised her with it soon after. Pictures she admired, he bought and framed them with his own hands, to ornament the little house for her dear sake. These she also took, for she would never part with them—they were reminders of the happy hours they had passed together.

In the garden every shrub, vine and flower, was planted there by his hands, and she had helped him. Even the poor little plants seemed to miss his tender care, for they had begun to wither. Julie, in her sorrow, said, "That even the flowers mourned for him, for they faded and died."

She did not remember that it was Autumn, the fall of the leaf, and that they too, like we poor mortals, must wither and decay.

She also took with her a large picture of her mother, which was prized by the bereaved girl and her father.

She was much grieved that Paul Girard had been suspected of complicity in her father's cruel murder, and stoutly proclaimed her belief in his innocence.

She refused to believe that Christine was in any way responsible, and when the rumor reached her, that Christine was suspected of having helped the culprits to the key, in order to effect an entrance to steal the money, she was incensed, and declared she, and her child should remain with her always, at least till Paul was proven innocent, as she believed without doubt he would be.

When Julie, Christine and little Marie were settled, a very grave thought came to the mind of the young girl.

At first in her grief she had given up hope,

but at her age, everything begins again. She must think of some means of earning a livelihood, for the pension of the old Captain had died with him.

True he might have saved something, but it took everything he could scrape together to pay for the long tedious lawsuit, to win the money that cost him his life.

"What could she do?" she asked herself. She could teach music, and she must set about at once to procure pupils. These thoughts were revolving themselves in her mind when Maurice made his appearance.

After greeting her lover, she told him of her plans. "My darling," he cried, "do you think for one moment that I would allow you to do a thing of that kind? No, you are my affianced wife, our hearts are united, and in the sight of Heaven, we are one. It is a great blow to me to be obliged to wait so long to claim you before the world as my own, but as it is your wish, I will wait with all the patience at my command, till your year of mourning has passed, then nothing can separate us. During this time you must allow me to provide for you."

Julie started to protest, but he prevented her with a kiss, saying, "There, my darling, it is my duty. I will do it for your father's sake, you shall be as sacred to me, as you were

to him. You will trust me, Julie, my life, my love?"

She had grown much thinner, and the color had faded in her cheeks, but her great blue eyes turned full upon him as she answered, "I can never forget the great confidence my dear father had in you." She laid her head upon his shoulder, and murmured, "I will trust you with my life," and then she burst into a paroxysm of weeping.

He took her in his strong arms, but did not try to check her weeping, he knew that when she grew calm, she would be the better for the outburst.

"God has tried you sorely, my darling," he said, "but it is doubtless for some good cause."

When she had ceased to weep, and became more quiet, he told her, that when the lawsuit was commenced, her father had insisted on him taking money to defray the expenses of the suit. He protested, telling the Captain he would furnish the necessary funds, and that if he won the suit he was willing to accept whatever costs there might be, together with a fee.

But the old gentleman insisted, and from time to time gave him sums of money.

Maurice, instead of using the money, had deposited it in the bank that in case the suit was lost, he alone would be the loser. That

money now amounted to 2,500 francs. At the same time he drew from his pocket the notes, and placed them in Julie's hands, saying, "Take them, my darling, they are from your father. I have kept them for you."

Julie took the notes, her eyes again filled with tears as she exclaimed through a great sob :

"Oh ! how good and noble you are, Maurice. I will accept them as a gift from you."

"They are yours, my love, to do with as you please, when they are gone, I will give you more. You must never want for anything as long as I live."

She looked very sad and sweet in her gown of deep mourning. Maurice looked at her, and could not help admiring her pale, young face, impulsively he exclaimed :

"Ah ! Julie, my beloved, I know that you love me, but you cannot love me as you loved him."

She laid her hand in his, as she replied with a sad smile, "Yes, Maurice, I did love my father very dearly, but the love I bear you is very different, I am content with it, for it is very sweet indeed."

And as these two young people plighted their vows of love anew, they seemed almost happy. It is well to be happy while we may, for we know not what the future may bring forth.

CHAPTER XIV.

TRIAL BY JURY.

DURING the three months that followed the murder of Captain Marteau, the affairs of Chopard and his supposed accomplice, Paul Girard, were progressing in the regular course of criminal affairs. After an examination both prisoners were held for trial.

They were each put in solitary confinement, but the absolute isolation of the secret cells, had not triumphed over their resistance. They still remained faithful to their system of defense, and protested their innocence. One with a low voice, drooping head and breaking heart; the other, Chopard, with bold speech, and firm gaze, without once contradicting himself.

His mode of defense was the same as we have already learned from his conversation with Maurice the day after the murder. Nothing they could do, would change him from his first story.

After their release from solitary confinement, each of the men were placed in larger, or double cells, and given as a companion a prisoner belonging to the class commonly

known as "Sheep." This was in hopes of their confessing, which would relieve the consciences of the judges and jurors.

The mission of the "Sheep" is to become intimate with the accused, to try and make him talk, to extort from him in confidence, some information which might prove useful.

Girard was crushed, his former conviction for a crime of which he was innocent, his long separation from his wife and child whom he longed to see, had broken his spirit, he remained silent, brooding over his cruel fate.

Chopard on the contrary talked freely with his inquisitive friends, told them of his numerous voyages, took them through a course of African travels, interested and amused them.

He politely offered them cigars, and instead of betraying himself, cleverly abstracted from them information he wished to know about what was passing in the outer world.

His chief object was to learn, if possible, something of his beloved child, his Madeleine, the being whom he worshipped. He could bear his imprisonment, even death, if needs be, but she must never know. His true name of ——— would never appear in connection with the crime, she would not suffer, his only anxiety was, "will Gonzago follow out my instructions? Ah! but he will, for he loves her."

The thought never occurred to his mind, he

never once doubted that she would marry Gonzago, for he had left a command. "I am destined as soon as I have had my trial," he would remark, "to be reinstated in society, I like to keep myself posted in regard to everything, politics and amusements, as well as the news of the day and local events in particular."

In this manner the wily rascal was able to gain the information he wished, that the beautiful Madeleine de Vallerice was still the idol of Paris, also that Dame Rumor had connected her name with a wealthy, and titled Spaniard.

His hard heart beat loud and fast, he knew that his plans were working, but no outward sign told of his satisfaction.

The authorities were at last obliged to give up the sheep who had become useless. They then resorted to the plan of uniting the two prisoners for several hours, in the hope that when they were left together, they would quarrel, or reproach each other, or perhaps in an unguarded moment make some allusion to the stolen money, or of the place where it might be concealed.

Nothing of the kind happened, Girard would repeat to his companion, "Ah! Monsieur, if you are really guilty, you should at least have feeling enough to declare I am not your accomplice."

Chopard always replied to this appeal, "Why, my dear Monsieur, I have never committed a crime," upon which Girard would relapse again into silence.

We will pass over the formalities which consume so much time. The day for the commencement of the trial arrived, the two prisoners were brought before the court of Assizes of the Seine.

The public besieged the *Palais de Justice*, and the guards were obliged to make the people form in line in the main corridor. In this crowd might be seen people in all walks of life, brought hither by morbid curiosity, or in some cases, a sense of justice to punish the criminals.

When the prisoners were ushered in, a commotion was observable in the assemblage. People crowded forward, and some rose to their feet, in eagerness to catch a glimpse of the culprits.

Chopard was attired in a neatly fitting black surtout, dark vest and trousers, a costume befitting a clerk, holding a good situation. The curiosity, and excitement of the crowd did not abash him in the least. He held his head calmly erect, and cast a long look over the entire assemblage.

He did not fear that Madeleine would by chance, visit such a place as a public court.

room, he well knew that her spare time was more apt to be taken up in some other way.

Paul Girard was very pale, his eyes were downcast. Then the jurors entered, one by one, or in groups talking among themselves. They took their seats upon the bench, where, from that time, to the close of the trial, they must not communicate with any one, unless to address a question to the presiding judge.

This bench stands under the large windows, seven in number, which light the court room. The accused is directly in front of them. The Criminal Code requires this, so they can thus watch the prisoner's every movement, study his face, and try to read his very conscience.

At last these words were heard. "The Court Gentlemen." The entire assemblage rose, and watched the president, the two counsellors, and the advocate-general as they slowly entered in their long red robes. Then the session was declared open. The identity of the accused parties was first established, the oath administered to the jury, and the clerk ordered the indictment to be read.

As we are conversant with the important points of the case, we shall not place this document before the eyes of the reader. We will merely say, that no new facts have been discovered since the investigation. The prisoners continued to assert their innocence. Chopard

appearing under the name of Chopard, his only name, as he had avowed, and the only one under which he was ever known, in spite of all the efforts that had been made to discover another.

He displayed great calmness, and wonderful ability and cunning in combating the evidence, admitting all the facts he could not deny, explaining them to his own advantage, and energetically denying what he could not explain.

Christine Girard appeared in a black gown, looking haggard and worn, traces of great sorrow marking her features. She had not at any time been under arrest, still the strictest watch had been kept upon her movements. When placed upon the witness stand she was calm, but her suppressed grief showed in an occasional deep-drawn sigh.

Her account of her husband's visit to Ivy Villa on the evening of the murder, as well as his preceding visits, conformed exactly in every detail with those of Paul.

This only convinced the judge that husband and wife had conferred together on that eventful visit, and had carefully prepared their replies in advance.

When asked to explain about the key, she replied without hesitation, that there were two keys, one the Captain always carried, the other was used by herself. She usually hung

her key on a hook near the door. She told that on the 23rd of October she remembered distinctly taking the key from the hook to open the door, to admit her husband, and was positive of having locked the door, and replaced it on the hook again.

She took the key from the hook a second time in answer to a ring. When she opened the door, she was confronted by the prisoner Chopard. The unexpected appearance of the stranger, and his peculiar expression frightened her. She must have forgotten the key for she had no recollection of it, and did not even miss it in the excitement that followed.

"You deny ever having seen the prisoner before that day?"

"I positively deny it. I never saw him before that day nor since, until to-day."

She became impassioned as she spoke. She was entirely devoted to those she loved. She spoke the truth, and did not allow herself to be dismayed by the solemnity of the courtroom.

The poor woman, it was very evident, had gained the sympathy of the vast audience, and had a verdict been called for her husband that moment, a favorable result might ensue. Paul Girard, encouraged by his wife, displayed more firmness, and energy than on any previous occasion. He protested his innocence present

and past, in agitated accents which made a decided impression on the jury and audience.

His attorney maintained that his unfortunate client was the victim of some diabolical plot. To deceive justice, and save the real culprit, a snare had, in his opinion, been set for this innocent man which resulted in his ruin.

"Chopard must have had an accomplice," he continued, "one who took the pocket-book containing the money, as the child had said, and made good his escape, no doubt the man at whom the shots were fired."

Why was it if Paul Girard was the real accomplice, that they had not found upon him, or his wife, or in her apartment, some natural evidence of theft, a sum of money that might be considered a portion of the spoils?

"Do not condemn this man," he exclaimed, turning to the jury, "he is a martyr. I swear it on my soul and conscience, he is innocent." He had touched his audience deeply by his eloquence and fervor. This man Monsieur Bernard Silvere, was a man of middle age, small of stature, a recognized attorney of good standing. He was also an associate in the law firm of Maurice de La Tour.

Maurice did not care to be conspicuous in the case, but preferred rather to watch the proceedings, and confer in private with his partner M. Silvere.

The good impression made for Girard, was lost when the advocate-general, after summing up all the facts of the case, opposed this mass of evidence, to the denial of the accused parties. He then reviewed the past, referring to the unfortunate Girard, and asked the jurors not to be influenced by his protestations of innocence, or the plea of his attorney. In his opinion, it only proved that the house of correction, in which the prisoner had passed five years of his life, was a school of falsehood and duplicity.

Then he took up the case of Chopard. He declared that this man had concealed the first part of his life, which he believed could not be free from some terrible crime, some shameful action. He followed him through the deserts of Africa, where he depicted him engaged in his ignoble traffic of human flesh, brutal and cruel, he had returned to Europe to continue his murderous work.

He then turned his attention to Christine Girard, showing but little indulgence for her. He did not doubt in the least, that she had aided the criminals to the extent of providing them with the key, the means of entrance, thinking probably that only robbery would be committed. She had doubtless submitted to the evil influence of her husband, not daring to resist him.

He concluded in strong terms, pointing to the culprits, "Let human justice take its course, God alone can save them." The counsels for the defense were then heard one after another, and confined themselves to pleading "Not guilty" with great sincerity.

The president then asked the prisoners if they had anything to say in their own behalf. Girard rose pale and trembling and in a faltering voice said, "Gentlemen, I swear before God, and man, that I am innocent."

Chopard without rising made a gesture to indicate that he had no desire to speak. The president summing up the evidence turned to the jurors, and charged them to remember their oaths, to betray neither the interest of society, but to fulfill their important duty in full liberty of conscience.

The jury retired to a room set apart for their deliberation, in order to decide upon its verdict.

It will be seen that Marie the child was not called as a witness. In the first place the testimony would not be taken, as she was too young, being but six years of age. No doubt had the child been brought to the trial, she would have impressed the jurors to be more lenient with her unfortunate father. The little one was much attached to the old Captain, and the scene of mourning that followed the

deed she had witnessed, proved too much for the little sensitive brain, and she fell a victim to brain fever, and lay for weeks hovering between life and death, but God in his mercy heard the prayers of the poor stricken mother, and spared her child, her only comfort. This may account for the calm, resigned demeanor of Christine on the witness stand.

Julie Marteau also appeared as a witness. The young girl's beauty was enhanced by the soft black robe of mourning, and all hearts were won by her sweet innocent manner, and her pale sad face.

She at once recognized Chopard as the man who had called at her home on the afternoon of October 23rd, and whose face had haunted her, even in her sleep. She told of her dream, how she thought this man had returned and murdered her dear father, how she awoke; she related all, with which the reader is already informed.

She kept up bravely during her painful narrative, but when she told of finding her father's body, she completely broke down, and had to be assisted from the court room by Maurice, for he was always by her side.

Many spectators shed real tears of condolence for the young girl, public sympathy was strongly in her favor.

It was the last day, the trial was over, and

the public had assembled, and were anxious to hear the verdict.

At last the jurors entered, grave, and silent, and solemn in appearance. The audience trembling with expectancy—what would it be? For they had evidently reached a conclusion.

The Court immediately resumed its sitting. The president turned to the jurors, and demanded the result of their deliberation.

The foreman rose, and with his hand upon his heart, replied with a voice trembling with emotion.

“On our honor and conscience, before God, and man, the decision of the jury is :

“Concerning Chopard ; On the first indictment, yes ! A majority declare the prisoner guilty.” A thrill of horror passes through the audience.

The verdict makes no mention of extenuating circumstances, so the penalty is death for Chopard.

The foreman resumes, “Concerning Paul Girard ; On the first indictment, yes ! A majority declare the prisoner guilty ! On a second indictment, yes ! A majority declare the prisoner guilty !

“A majority unite in declaring that, there are extenuating circumstances in favor of the accused !” There is another shiver in the audience.

The two prisoners are then introduced, to listen to the verdict of the jury. The advocate-general requests the court to pass sentence upon the prisoners.

The president, after reading the text of the law pronounces the decree that condemns.

"Chopard to the penalty of death." This terrible sentence does not appear to produce any effect upon Chopard. He bestows a long calm glance on the crowd, with a smile for the lawyers. One would suppose that it did not concern him.

"Paul Girard to hard labor for the remainder of his natural life." Girard was overwhelmed, he murmured, "Prison again! always! always!" Suddenly his wife rushes to him, takes his face in her hands, and kisses him wildly. The despairing woman clung to him, she would not let him go.

This scene touched the spectators deeply. The jurors glanced at each other, they feared they had made a mistake!

CHAPTER XV.

THE FATAL STEP.

WHILE the events set forth in the preceding chapter were being enacted, we are anxious to know something of the movements of Madeleine de Vallerice, the daughter of the culprit, who has just been adjudged by a jury of twelve staunch men guilty of a fearful crime, for which he must pay the penalty with his life; and Gonzago, the fiend for whom poor Paul Girard must suffer sorrow and disgrace.

Gonzago lost no time in leaving Paris, and was traveling in Spain conforming in every detail to the instructions given him by Chopard.

This enforced exile was not altogether to his fancy, but his safety demanded it, besides he was in hopes that his absence for a time, together with her father's letter extolling him, might soften the heart of Madeleine toward him. He fancied himself madly in love with her.

He endeavored in accordance with his teacher's advice, to thoroughly master the papers given him, in order that he might afterward destroy them, but he found that no easy lesson to memorize.

After devoting the morning to study, he sauntered forth to spend his time in clubs, and *salons*, where he boldly presented himself under his new name, and title "Don José, Marquis de Alvarez."

The civil record was so perfectly prepared, that no one thought of questioning its legality. The information given him by Chopard, regarding his family, was complete.

He even succeeded in deceiving old residents of Havana, who had known the former Marquis. The last scion of the family, for whom he was passing himself off, had left Havana at a very early age, and as he grew to manhood spent his time in travel.

It was in Africa that Chopard had seen him die alone, kept the secret of his death, and had taken possession of his papers.

The relations which Gonzago thus formed in Spain, would follow him to Paris and give him the social position dreamed of by Chopard.

He had read of the arrest of Chopard before he left Paris, thanks to these articles, he was enlightened upon some points, which had been until now obscure to him.

He could not readily understand the ruse Chopard had employed in his attempts to mislead the authorities, and put them on the wrong scent. Chopard had said to him, chance might at any moment make his situation peri-

lous, but his real accomplice, thanks to his cunning, incurred no risk, for Paul Girard was to assume all responsibilities of the crime.

Did Chopard's real accomplice pity the poor wretch, who, like some fly caught in a spider's web, could find no way to escape from the toils so perfidiously woven around him? No! This man had no heart, no feeling, save for himself; he was happy in the knowledge that the evidence that was ruining Paul Girard, was saving him. He was not inclined to destroy the edifice constructed with so much care and peril.

But what if a whim should some day seize Chopard? He shuddered at the thought. Would it not be much easier, since he had all the money in his possession, in drafts of Spain, having changed the bank notes given him, to renounce the idea of returning to Paris, where his destiny, and even his life depended upon a man's caprice?

He soon dispelled that thought, for Chopard could reach him as well in a foreign country, as in France.

Then Madeleine, to whom his passion chained him, whom he was eager to wed, for she was the most beautiful, and sought after of all women in Paris.

Then with a sudden thought, "but how about my former sweetheart, Floretta?"

Here his dark brows knitted, and he fell into thought.

His reverie was of two women. One was a member of the demi-monde, beautiful, heartless as only a siren of Spanish blood can be. She loved the handsome Gonzago, she had been his plaything for years, and he feared it would not be so easy to rid himself of her, now when he wished to marry.

But he would tell her, offer some kind of a compromise, and make her understand it was for their mutual benefit. Then he thought of Madeleine, beautiful, haughty, and cold. He had tried hard to win her love, but she scorned him. Can it be possible that this irreproachable creature, commanding the respect of all who met her, is the daughter of his friend in crime? It surely was not a case of "like father, like daughter."

When Chopard had placed all confidence in this man saying, "Your love for my child is a sufficient guarantee," he was for once mistaken.

With Gonzago everything seemed to smile. He, the illegitimate child, born in obscurity is now known as Marquis José de Alvarez; surely a brilliant future is opened to him, and why should he renounce it all, on account of some scruples in regard to a former convict.

It was now two months since he left Paris, so he made arrangements to return as soon as possible.

Madeleine read the account of the murder of Captain Marteau and was much shocked. The money that was as she supposed legally hers by gift, had now fallen into the hands of some assassin. It was horrible to think of, in her heart she felt a pang of sorrow for the young girl, so suddenly bereft of father and fortune.

But what was the loss of father and fortune? Did she not have the love of the noblest man on earth?

The reader will forgive this thought of hers, when they think of her father, for he was not the man to inspire one with a fond fatherly love.

She did not know that her father had been employed as chief clerk in Maurice de La Tour's office, she knew he was employed in some business but could not learn from him what it was, and did not trouble to find out for herself. Of this man Chopard she had never heard and did not attach any importance to it, except to condemn his unnatural act.

After her rescue by Maurice, which was chronicled far and wide, and her fated visit to Ivy Villa, she tried to make herself believe that it was beneath her dignity as a woman to love a man who had openly proclaimed his love for another, and above all others, the woman whom she believed had openly defied and defeated her.

She received her father's letter, saying he was going away, and leaving a command that she should marry his friend, who was madly in love with her, and also speaking in glowing terms of the Marquis, and the brilliant future awaiting her by a union with him.

The idea was repulsive to her, and when she received an impassioned appeal from Gonzago, asking to let him say good-bye, she returned his letter without as much as a word. But he did not despair, he gave her time to reflect, and it was a wise move.

Nature, in endowing Madeleine with such perfect beauty, had undoubtedly created her to love and to be loved. Unknown to herself she became so absorbed in her love for Maurice, that she was indifferent to all else, yet it only made her art the more perfect. The mystery which hovered over her life, had developed in her a longing for the man she loved. She shuddered when she thought that love was not for her, and fell in her own estimation to think she still cherished it, when he had never given her even a look of encouragement.

When the trial of Chopard began she read the papers, simply because Maurice's name was mentioned, though most always in connection with that of Julie Marteau.

Her sympathy went out for Paul Girard, and his poor unfortunate wife, as she recalled

having seen her and also the little Marie, whom she had never forgotten. She was lazily stretched upon the sofa in her dressing room, in a simple white *robe de chambre* of some soft clinging material, her long hair flowing loosely about her white temples, and falling nearly to the floor. She had been reading the last accounts of the trial. The paper dropped from her hands, she was thinking. The lids of her great dark eyes were half closed. Looking at her one could see that a great mental struggle was going on, for her expression changed with her thoughts.

Her father no longer gave any sign of life. He had probably embarked on some new, and extended voyage, as he had told her; here a sigh escaped her, as she thought of his mysterious life.

As she lay there her imagination was active, she reviewed and analyzed the past, and strove to gain a thorough understanding of the situation, in regard to her love for Maurice.

She thought if she could but see him once more; she could not call at his office, what excuse could she make, besides she must not lose his respect. A mad desire seized her, she must see him, but where? Ah! she thought, I will go to the court to witness the trial, there I can see him once more, and then try to tear him from my heart forever.

She rose quickly, and rang for her maid, who entered almost immediately. "Get my things ready, Suzanne, I will go out."

"Very well, Mademoiselle," at the same time she handed her mistress a letter adding, that it had just arrived.

She took the letter, and saw that it was post-marked Paris, she seated herself again on the sofa and opened it, the signature appended was that of José de Alvarez.

It was very short, merely announcing his arrival in Paris, and begging her to receive him; he would call upon her at two o'clock. She read the letter over again, and after a few moments of apparent struggle she started quickly to her feet, saying at the same time, "You need not order the carriage, Suzanne, I have changed my mind, I will remain at home to-day, return in half an hour, then I will dress."

Suzanne bowed and withdrew. Madeleine paced back and forth. "Yes, I will receive this man; it is my father's command that I should accept him as my husband. I do not love him, I cannot love him, but if I marry him, he can give me wealth, and a title. He loves me and in time I may learn to respect him, and perhaps forget my love for Maurice." She was a woman of indomitable will power, and once her mind was made up nothing could change it. It may be added

that this was the only trait inherited from her father.

This woman was destined by fate to play a difficult rôle off the stage, as well as before the footlights. Had Gonzago's note, by any chance been delayed, she would have gone to the court room and there met the man on trial for his life, and made the horrible discovery, that he was her own father, but it came just in time to change the whole current of her life.

Two o'clock found her resplendent in the latest fashion, in her own drawing-room. As may be supposed Gonzago was punctual to the minute almost. She received him formally, and could not help staring at his changed appearance.

His hair which he had worn very short, was now rather long, his sweeping moustache, like his hair was very black, and even his complexion was of a deeper tint. He looked the true Spaniard that he was.

She laughingly assured him that had she met him on the street, she would not have recognized him. He was delighted at the effect he had produced, for he seemed to read in it, the success of his suit.

As we are all aware she did not love him, but he was really a handsome fellow, his manners were perfect, and again she was secretly elated at the prospect of bearing the title of

Marquise, and playing an important rôle in that Parisian society, in which she now had no place.

She would try to alter her opinion of him, and to reflect credit upon him, as his wife.

She allowed him to sit beside her, and discuss their future projects, which did not take her long to decide.

Gonzago could not suppress his admiration, he had never seen a more dazzlingly beautiful creature. She wore a lavender princess gown, with a profusion of rich lace, and a large corsage bouquet of fresh violets, which exhaled their perfume throughout the entire room.

She wore no jewelry whatever, but in her shining hair, which was dressed after the fashion of the day, she had arranged a bunch of the same sweet violets.

It was decided that he should be presented that very afternoon, as her affianced husband.

Suzanne announced some friends, and very soon the room was filled with her usual court, who made the acquaintance of the Marquis. They would have hated a lover, but they could not hate a husband, so the Marquis saved their vanity. Each one could say to himself, "This is the reason I did not succeed."

Gonzago lost no time in making arrangements for a speedy marriage. He felt that he was being watched from the little prison cell.

Madeleine gave notice of her permanent retirement from the stage, much to the dissatisfaction of her manager. The public flocked to see her while they may, for they were to lose their idol, and the Marquis de Alvarez was a most envied man.

During the publishing of the bans, he gave his attention to providing himself with a residence suitable to his rank and fortune. Having consulted two of Madeleine's friends, a banker and a broker, he finally hired a house in the neighborhood of the Boulevard Malesherbes, and gave it the name of Château de Alvarez. He furnished it with rich and elegant furniture, purchased horses and carriages, and hired servants, all of which he paid for immediately with the drafts brought from Spain.

The marriage took place early in January. The papers gave the fullest details of it in advance, and spoke in the highest complimentary terms of Madeleine.

As we observe, Gonzago was acting openly, with a brilliant glare that dazzled, and blinded those who might have been tempted to examine him too closely.

The marriage was solemnized in the church of St. Augustine, without much pomp or delay. The public clamored for admittance, but many of Madeleine's friends were there, and also some Spanish families residing in Paris.

Madeleine was bewitchingly beautiful under the bridal veil, and wreath of orange blossoms, superbly elegant and graceful in her robe of white moire, covered with rich lace, and a sweeping train. She resembled a stately white lily.

Concealed behind one of the columns in the nave, was one who watched Madeleine with jealousy and anger flashing from her wicked black eyes. There was vengeance in her heart, as she saw the man she loved united to this woman. She could not but admit that the fair bride was beautiful, and it made her fierce to see her an honored wife. She muttered, "He is mine, he shall be mine always. It is her day now, mine will come. I can bide my time."

This woman was Floretta Castro, the Spanish mistress of Gonzago, who had accompanied her lover to Paris. When the words were spoken which made Madeleine the wife of Gonzago, at that very moment, there arose before her the image of the man she loved, the man she had tried to cast out of her heart. She had battled with herself, and was determined to live it down by marrying the man her father had chosen for her. She had argued that Maurice was deeply in love with Julie Marteau, and would soon marry her. It was her duty to think no more of him. Alas for

human frailty, the temptation that comes to all sometimes in our lives, was to come to her. Would she think of duty then, when her heart was torn, and yearning for one word of love and sympathy? This day's events was the beginning, it was her fatal step.

On the same afternoon, at almost the precise hour, a scene was being enacted in another part of the city, which held the spectators spellbound. From the brilliantly lighted church, the gorgeous assemblage, and the beautiful golden-haired young bride, to the crowded court-room, where a sinister, dark man was receiving his death sentence for a fearful crime.

What was it that pierced the heart of Madeleine, and caused the pain from which she nearly fainted?

It was the instinctive human bond, again the workings of fate, in the life of one woman.

CHAPTER XVI.

MADELEINE IS SUSPECTED.

THE charges that had resulted in the condemnation of Chopard, had been greatly discussed, and many did not consider them sufficient for such a terrible expiation.

The newspapers, which are generally a faithful index of public opinion, also spoke in favor of the condemned. They declared they had a profound respect for the decrees of justice, that they could not allow themselves to question the verdict of a jury, but ended in attacking the one condemning Chopard, and demolished it by pen strokes. They argued that his previous record as far as could be ascertained was unstained, but they condemned him to death, while the other, Paul Girard, was a former convict, and was only condemned to hard labor. How utterly absurd!

There was no disguising the fact that public opinion was favorable to Chopard, and this annoyed the authorities not a little.

As the time drew near to set the day for the execution, the *procureur-général* summoned Gaston, the chief of the police service and said, "I myself pay slight heed to news-

paper articles, and to the rumors that prevail in Paris, but it is necessary to reassure the minds of the jurors. In our opinion Chopard's guilt is unquestionable, and it is also in the minds of all persons who have carefully studied the affair, but a person who persists in asserting his innocence is troublesome. Could you not induce him to make a confession? There is no longer the same reasons for a denial of his guilt, and perhaps he could be induced to speak."

"I shall exhort absolutely nothing from him," replied Gaston, with frankness, "he is one of those criminals who never waver, with his head on the block, he would cry out,—'I am innocent.'"

"But you will try?" inquired the *procureur-général*.

"Yes, I will try, I shall go to the prisoner to-morrow."

"I thank you most heartily," replied the other, "as the court has refused the application for a new trial, there are no grounds for it. We are beset on all sides by weak, and repentant jurors, and a crowd of people opposed to capital punishment."

"This Chopard is a consummate scoundrel, and deserves no clemency, but I will do what I can to-morrow, Monsieur, as I have promised you."

The Conciergerie is not a prison in a strict sense of the word. It is a house of justice, merely a transient abiding place for prisoners. They are brought here before their trial, and those who are found guilty, remain until the place where they shall serve out their sentence, has been decided.

Those who are condemned to death, never remain more than two or three days, but, as soon as the appeal for a new trial is denied, they are transferred to the Conciergerie. Those condemned to hard labor for life are also transferred almost immediately, to the same depot, where they await the date of their departure for New Caledonia.

Through the trial Gaston had given more than usual thought to the whole affair. In his mind there was a third party, who had evidently secured the pocket-book, otherwise why was not some trace of the missing money found?

A suspicion that had escaped all others, had forced itself upon him. This Madeleine de Vallerice, to whom old Claude Marteau had willed his fortune, who was she? Where did she come from? The more he thought of her, the more determined his resolve to find out more of her. He sent for Partout, his most trusted agent, and gave him instructions relative to his expected visit on the following day. He then

consulted his watch, and started out to pay a visit to Maurice de La Tour.

He found him in his office. "I called upon you, Monsieur," he said, "as I think you can give me a little information. It was you I believe, who won the celebrated will case in favor of Mademoiselle Marteau?"

"'Tis true, Monsieur."

"I wish to know whether from observation or inquiry, you know anything about the antecedents of Mademoiselle de Vallerice?"

"I must say, Monsieur, that I know almost nothing."

"Have you seen her since the will case was decided?"

"Yes, on the very evening after." Here Maurice described his rescue of Madeleine, and her visit to Ivy Villa, but he added quickly:

"It is not possible you suspect her of being implicated in any way, with the murder of Captain Marteau."

"I believe," said Gaston deliberately, "if she is not the actual murderess, she is an accomplice."

Maurice was astonished, and asked, "May I know the reason of this belief?"

"Certainly, Monsieur. This woman's life prior to her appearance on the Paris stage as an actress, is shrouded in mystery. I believe her to be an adventuress, who, after losing the

fortune left her by Claude Marteau, was just the sort of person to have little scruples as to the means of regaining it, and this Chopard who has been condemned for the murder, is a paid assassin in her employ."

"I trust your suspicions are groundless, Monsieur," exclaimed Maurice, "for she is a great favorite with the public, and at present all Paris are talking of her recent brilliant marriage with a wealthy Spanish nobleman."

"Nevertheless, I shall have a strict watch kept upon her." Here he confided his intention to Maurice, of trying to draw a confession from Chopard.

Before parting an appointment was made for the following day.

The next day Gaston, accompanied by Partout, entered the Conciergerie about noon.

He went to the director's office, acquainted him with the object of his visit, and requested permission to see the prisoner.

"You have but to command, Monsieur," replied the director, "do you wish the prisoner brought here?"

"No, I will see him in the courtyard," to which place the three men proceeded. Monsieur Jacques, the director, was about to give the order to a couple of the guards to bring Chopard, when Gaston interrupted him saying, "Hold, the other prisoner, Paul Girard, I will

speak to him first. His little girl, who was too ill to appear at the trial, has now sufficiently recovered to be brought here to-day."

"For what purpose?" inquired the governor.

"In order to definitely identify if possible the criminals," replied Gaston.

"If she is the child of Paul Girard, it is not likely she will accuse her own father, even though she saw him commit the deed."

"She will not be able to recognize her father, not having seen him since infancy, besides she does not know that the man convicted as Chopard's accomplice, is her father."

"Very well, Monsieur," replied Jacques, and gave the order to bring in Paul Girard. Partout, a nervous quick-witted little Frenchman, was over zealous in his work, he left no stone unturned to rise in his chosen profession. He was ever on the alert, and always trying if possible to outwit his associates. His chief aim, and ambition was to do something wherein he could distinguish himself.

In his quick nervous manner, he approached M. Gaston, exclaiming, "Monsieur Gaston, I have a fearful itching in my right elbow," at the same time he placed his right hand over his left elbow.

"Well, what of it?" gruffly replied Gaston.

"This is a sure sign——"

Gaston interrupted with, "that you are daily growing to be——"

"Yes, Monsieur," interrupted Partout.

"And fully developed——"

"What, Monsieur?" with impatience.

"Jackass," blurted out Gaston.

Partout turned aside in disgust as he muttered to himself, "And I bear this with patience," then with a look of compassion, he added, "poor fellow, he can't help it, merely professional jealousy. Oh! if I could only have a chance to distinguish myself." At this moment Maurice entered the courtyard.

"Good morning, Monsieur Gaston, I was told I would find you here."

Gaston observing after returning his salutation, that he was alone said, "I see you are alone, Monsieur. I trust the child is well enough to come?" This was said a little anxiously, as he had counted much upon the child's visit.

"I am happy to say," replied Maurice, "that little Marie has grown quite well again. She will be here presently with her mother."

Here the governor entered with Paul Girard, accompanied by two guards. As Girard entered, he walked more like a drunken man, staggering at every step, his limbs seemed to totter beneath his weight, his head dropped heavily, he was worn, and pale, and seemed to have aged ten years since the last cruel judgment had been pronounced upon him.

The reader will observe that both the prisoners were dressed in precisely the same clothes, as on the night they were taken into custody, instead of the regulation prison garb, donned by the condemned.

This was part of the instruction given to Partout, so that the child might be aided in remembering them. Gaston proceeded to question Paul, receiving the same answer given from the first in regard to his visit to Ivy Villa, there was hope that he might in some way, commit himself by a word, which would give some excuse that his story was prepared.

Gaston, hardened as he was, felt a sympathy for this poor unfortunate, which circumstance had so clearly worked to condemn. He would help him if he could. What if he would confess? As this thought entered his mind, he said:

"It is mostly of Chopard that I wish to speak. Confess that you saw him commit the deed, and you shall be rewarded, I promise you."

"I know it would be to my interest to serve you, Monsieur, but I can only repeat what I have said a thousand times, that I never saw Chopard until after I was in custody." He spoke with much fervor.

"I am sorry," replied Gaston, "there is no hope for you."

"Alas, Monsieur, I know it," then raising his head, and straightening himself to his full height, he continued, "but innocent though I am, I will try to meet it like a man."

Maurice who had been standing apart with Partout, had overheard the whole interview. He now came forward and taking Paul by the hand said, "Paul Girard, something in my heart tells me you are an innocent man."

Paul was much overcome by this act of kindness, and replied impulsively, "Thank you, Monsieur, thank you, for your kind words."

Seeing that the interview was at an end, he moved toward the left of the courtyard, and entered the chapel used by such prisoners who wished to visit it.

Partout looked after him, and then exclaimed, "Somehow or other the farther I get into this case, the farther I am from distinguishing myself."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MURDERER'S CUNNING.

WHEN Jacques, the governor of the Conciergerie, brought Paul Girard to the courtyard, he instantly departed for the purpose of giving the order, to have Chopard conducted into the presence of the chief of the detective force.

At the moment Paul disappeared into the chapel, the governor re-entered, accompanied by Chopard and the two guards, who proceeded to remove the handcuffs from the hands of the prisoner.

This being done, Chopard politely thanked the governor and turning to Gaston, deliberately extended his hand, exclaiming, "Good morning, Monsieur Gaston, I am pleased to see you, believe me."

Gaston was, to say the least, astonished, but replied coldly :

"I scarcely thought my presence would give you pleasure."

"Why not?" he replied, sarcastically, "you discharge your very disagreeable duties with

the best possible courtesy. To be sure, your profession is a somewhat degraded one."

Gaston muttered aside, "Confound his impudence."

Chopard continued, "Still it is not your fault." Then, placing his hand upon the only seat that happened to be in the yard, he said, "Excuse me, be seated."

Gaston was staggered. He was about to take the proffered seat, when with the greatest effrontery possible, Chopard turned the chair around, seating himself astride at the same time.

"Have you a cigar?" Gaston checked himself from making a sharp retort at the fellow's audacity, but concluding it would be more to his purpose to humor him, took a cigar case from his pocket. It contained only one cigar. This he passed to the prisoner, who, taking it, glanced meaningly at Partout, remarking, "I am sorry you haven't one for Monsieur Partout," and returned the case to Gaston.

Partout turned to Maurice, and remarked, "Doesn't he do it fine though?"

Having provided himself with a light at the expense of Monsieur Gaston, Chopard continued, "Well, what is the news from the outside world? My application for a new trial has been denied. Oh! I knew it would be, so

you need not be afraid to tell me." He continued smoking with the greatest possible coolness.

"The courts cannot find the slightest pretext for granting it."

"Very well, then, I must rely upon my appeal for mercy."

"Exactly," said Gaston, "and it is regarding that very appeal that I am here. There is only one way for you to gain sympathy."

"What is that way? I confess I am not over anxious to perish on the scaffold."

"You must give up the rôle you are playing."

"The rôle of an innocent man?" Then with assumed seriousness, "Do you really think it would serve me, Monsieur?"

"I do," replied Gaston quickly.

Chopard replied with marked sarcasm, "I thought you had a better opinion of my intelligence, Monsieur. You think you can persuade me that my chances of mercy would be greater, if there was no longer any doubt of my guilt?"

"There is no doubt of your guilt. You were found at the house of the murdered man, at the very threshold, and confronted by the child who saw you commit the deed."

"Bah!" doggedly replied Chopard. "An hallucination of childhood. A bad dream, no doubt, in which she saw the bogie man."

"It is my opinion," said Gaston, "that you had more than one accomplice. Two shots were fired at a fleeing man, without effect."

Here the prisoner sneered as he replied, "Which does not reflect much credit upon the marksmanship of your soldiers."

"This man has not yet been captured, still there is no doubt of your guilt."

"Excuse me, Monsieur Gaston, there is a doubt, and a very grave doubt. It is to this very doubt that I owe the honor of your visit. You come from some great Magistrate, whose duty it is to order my execution, and endeavor to trap a confession from me, to justify his act to the public. They dare not kill me."

"Dare not?" replied Gaston, in astonishment.

Chopard rose from his chair, and, drawing himself up to his full length, looked Gaston straight in the face, as he answered :

"No, they dare not. The evidence against me is not strong enough to warrant a sentence of death. Besides, I have not, like Paul Girard, a criminal record, who, for all I know, may be as innocent, poor devil, as I am."

Here Partout turned to Maurice again, and said in great excitement, "He's a magnificent criminal, just the one I like to tackle."

Chopard continued in an injured manner, "I little thought when I hunted the elephant,

and traded in ivory, that French justice would one day have me in its clutches."

Gaston was quick-witted, he said, "I admire your genius, you are the cleverest criminal that has ever passed through my hands."

Chopard with mock politeness bowed low, "And you, Monsieur, are the greatest detective that I have ever met," then with a wink aside, and a tinge of slang he added, "I don't think."

Gaston had given some instructions to the governor in a whisper, who turned and left the courtyard, then addressing Chopard, he continued, "Where did you obtain your education?" then adding quickly as if to catch him off his guard, "In Central Africa?"

"Do you suppose all the intelligence in the world is confined to France?" Partout was all excitement, "Oh! he is a hot one, he nearly takes my breath away."

Gaston, seeing the governor approach with a number of prisoners, exclaimed impatiently, "I am satisfied you have a criminal record, in France."

"I defy you," was the bold response.

The prisoners all in their regular prison garb entered the courtyard with the guards, and filed right and left. They had evidently been instructed, for they each one stood gazing at Chopard.

"Do you see these prisoners? See how closely they eye you,"

"Well, what of it?" then with an air of conceit, "I am a handsome man, something they don't see here every day," and he cast a significant glance at Gaston.

"I am in hopes of you meeting some old friends among their number."

"Bah! you will never know more than I have already told you." He turned as he spoke, just in time to catch sight of a prisoner who was just entering. He gave a very slight start.

The prisoner, a short burly fellow, upon seeing Chopard, stopped short, with his eyes riveted, as though gazing at an apparition.

Gaston immediately ordered a halt, and addressing the burly prisoner said, "You recognize this man? Speak, I sent for you for I heard he was an old pal of yours." Chopard looked at the prisoner in a intimidating manner.

"I think he was, but that was a long time ago." Here he put his brawny hand to his chin, as if to bring back an old resemblance.

Quick as thought, Gaston concluded that Chopard's beard, which he still wore, must come off in order to aid this man's memory. He turned to the governor and said, "Have you a barber handy?" Jacques answered in the affirmative, and Gaston ordered him summoned at once, to remove Chopard's beard.

When Chopard heard the order given, he

glared at Gaston as if he would pounce upon him. The governor placed his hand on his sword, the guards presented their bayonets, they felt that they were in the presence of a dangerous man, and were fully prepared.

Gaston said, "Why do you fear? If you are innocent, why do you object?"

Chopard gave a coarse laugh and replying to the first question said, "Fear? I never feared man, beast, or the devil." And turning, he took the seat that the barber had placed for him.

During the process of shaving, his mind was active. He feared that some artist might sketch his portrait for the illustrated papers, which might fall under the eyes of Madeleine, who would surely recognize him. Should such a thing occur, and his beard was removed, it would render him unrecognizable.

These thoughts, which did not occur to him on the moment, were now a source of great satisfaction. While the barber was completing his work, Gaston proceeded to question the prisoner. "What is your name?"

"Loustaloo," was the reply.

"Are you afraid of this man?"

"I'm not afraid. It is not his name I recollect, but his nickname, we used to call him the hunchback in disguise, because he had a small hump upon his shoulders, which he contrived to conceal."

Here Partout exclaimed, "I will place my hand upon those humps, it will give me luck to distinguish myself." He advanced to the chair, and placed his hand on the shoulders of Chopard, just as the barber had finished. Chopard rose and turned suddenly, whereupon poor Partout almost fell to the floor with fear, and made a straight line for the farther end of the courtyard, much to the amusement of the spectators.

Gaston gave a loud command, "Chopard, step this way." Chopard advanced about half way to where Loustaloo was standing, and looking him in the face with a cynical glare, exclaimed:

"Well, do you know me now?" If his looks gave cause for fear before, they were not at all improved. His cheeks were hollow, his chin heavy and prominent, his lips thin, drawn over a cruel mouth, the change was so complete that it is doubtful if Madeleine would recognize him, if she chanced to meet him in the street.

Informers are not usually remarkable for their courage. Loustaloo turned pale, his memory had returned to him, but he knew it would never do for him to turn on too much light. Gaston noticed his agitation and said:

"Now listen to me, I will add twenty-five francs to your allowance, and give you twenty

francs now, if you will answer my question, and speak the truth. Was it in jail you first met this man?"

"No, in Paris."

"What was his name, was it anything like Chopard?"

"No, it was longer like—like," he stopped, and Gaston noticed that Chopard was looking at him in a threatening manner.

"Why do you look at this man so? Lower your eyes," he commanded. Chopard did not obey but remained with his eyes fixed upon Loustaloo. What did it matter to him if he did displease the chief of the detective force? What did he care if he did confirm that officer's suspicion? His only thought was of his child, if his right name was spoken, what did it mean for her? He had told Gonzago that he would sell his life dearly, but that Chopard should be sacrificed, to spare the name of his child.

Just at that moment Loustaloo exclaimed, "Ah! I have it." With one spring Chopard made for the terrified informer, and it took the combined efforts of the guards with their bayonets to hold him back, while two stalwart soldiers took him by each shoulder. Brought to a halt, he exclaimed:

"This man is mistaken. I have never had any name but Chopard!"

Again Loustaloo cried out, "Ah, that voice!"

Gaston said in a persuasive manner, "Well, why do you not speak? Suppose I give you double the promised sum?"

"Not if you gave me a fortune," he cried; "he would kill me. He would spring upon me and murder me. I feel his fingers about my throat now. Save me! Save me!" and the terrified wretch threw himself upon his knees in a paroxysm of great excitement.

Gaston saw that it was useless to prolong this scene, and ordered the prisoners to be removed, and they all filed into the chapel.

During all this time Chopard had not taken his eyes from the terrified man, until he was taken out by the guards. Then he addressed Gaston:

"You see, friend Gaston, you have not succeeded nor will you succeed."

"You have defied us," Gaston replied. "Still there is no wish to execute you on circumstantial evidence. Your sentence will doubtless be committed to life imprisonment at New Caledonia."

Chopard looked at him with sarcastic cunning, as he replied, "You are too kind, Monsieur, but I would rather stand in my place at this very moment, than in the place of the jury who convicted me, the judge who sen-

tenced me. I pity you all, witnesses, jury, judge, and you in particular, Monsieur Gaston. It is not what you expected," with a sneer, "but it is all I have to say;" turning to Jacques, he extended his hands for the handcuffs to be replaced, saying, "Oblige me."

As the governor replaced the shackles, he informed him that he might spend a short time in the chapel if he desired. He thanked the governor as he approached the chapel, over the door of which was a large cross, he raised his eyes in mock piety as he exclaimed:

"They make a martyr of me," and entered the chapel.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CONVICT'S CHILD.

As Chopard disappeared through the chapel door, which was guarded by two soldiers, Gaston turned to Maurice :

"Ah ! Monsieur de La Tour, I am afraid he is too much for us."

"Afraid ?" said Partout, "I am sure of it, I feel now that I shall never distinguish myself."

"Monsieur Gaston," replied Maurice, "that man knew Chopard's real name but was afraid to speak it, I am certain. I intend to spare no effort to discover it."

"Thanks, Monsieur, any assistance that will aid in fastening the guilt on this man, will be duly appreciated."

Maurice then learned from the governor that Loustaloo's term would expire in about two months, and where he was likely to go. "I have a slight clue at last, and will work upon it."

Paul Girard re-entered the courtyard from the chapel, and addressing Gaston said, "Monsieur Gaston, I have obtained permission to

see my wife and child, don't use your influence to have it revoked, I beseech you."

Gaston assured him that he certainly would not, and as Paul was thanking him, a guard entered followed by Christine. The next moment they were locked in each other's embrace, regardless of those around them. Gaston and the others retired to a far end of the yard, and engaged in conversation.

"Oh! my husband," said Christine, "they tell me this is the last time we will be permitted to see you."

"Yes, wife, the last time on this side of the grave."

"The grave," repeated the broken-hearted woman, "oh! that we were both laid there, but for our child's sake I must struggle on. She will soon be here with Mademoiselle Julie."

"Our child, our little Marie," he spoke with his whole heart, a radiant look lighting up his pale face as he thought of the child, "how I long to clasp her to my heart. I dreamt of her last night. I dreamt that I lay bound with heavy chains, in blank darkness, unrevealed by a single ray of light. The living world knew not of me. I was forgotten, deserted. Hope forsook me, and I waited for death. Just when my despair was greatest a faint light appeared, struggling through the

darkness, which grew and took shape, until it assumed the form of our darling child. She laid her little hand upon my face, and whispered the one word 'hope,' and with that word came a flood of light, and by the light I saw a beautiful, fair-haired woman kneeling at the feet of our child. You appeared with the old smile you used to wear, in other days. Oh! what happiness we felt, I thought that I was free." Here the look of happiness which was so brief changed, and his voice told of the agony he felt, as he continued, "Then I awoke, the horrible reality dawned upon me, it was only a dream, and I was a prisoner for life. Oh! my child! my child!"

Christine, sobbing, raised her eyes to Heaven, as she exclaimed, "Oh! my God! my God! have pity!" The governor approached to remind them that the time of their meeting must end.

Here the prisoners re-entered from the chapel, and were ordered to halt. Paul turned an appealing look to Gaston. "Can I not see my child?"

"Yes, but after I have questioned her. Take your place among the rest, and make no sign until I signal to you."

Paul was disappointed, but he had no choice, so he fell back behind the other prisoners.

The governor said that the child was waiting, and ordered a guard to bring her.

When little Marie entered she looked around in a frightened manner, the scene was a strange one to her, and she would have turned and fled, but she caught sight of her mother, and her fears were forgotten. She ran to her exclaiming joyously :

"Oh! Mamma, can't I see my dear papa now?" then the sweet sad voice continued, "before these bad men take him away forever!"

Gaston approached the child, and said very kindly, "Come here, little one, don't be afraid." Marie went shyly to him. His gentle tone and manner seemed to reassure her. "What is your name?"

"Marie Girard," replied the child, frankly, "but I am called little Marie."

"Well, little Marie," said Gaston, at the same time stroking the shining curls, "your mamma has told you, no doubt, to always be truthful?"

"Oh—yes, Monsieur, she always said that my papa was an honest man, and I must always be good and always tell the truth."

"Then tell me, my little girl, when did you see your papa last?"

"Oh! I don't remember," opening wide her big blue eyes, "I was a tiny baby when they

put my poor papa in prison, and they never let me see him since."

"Can you remember the night of Captain Marteau's murder?"

"Oh! yes," said the child with a shudder.

"How many men were there?"

"There were two, one killed poor Captain Marteau, and the other took the pocket-book out of his pocket and ran away."

"Do you think you would know them now?"

"Oh! yes, I am sure I would."

"Now like a good little girl I want you to look well at all these prisoners, and see if you can identify the two men."

Marie looked at all the prisoners until she came to Chopard, when she instantly shrunk from him with a cry. Even though his beard had been removed, there was something in his face, perhaps his eyes, that had impressed the child, and she could not forget. She ran to her mother in fear.

Gaston, Maurice, and all who witnessed this scene were satisfied that the child was not mistaken.

Gaston said quietly, "Look around, don't you see the other?"

Marie looked from one to the other, and shook her head thoughtfully. "No, Monsieur, he is not there," then she added quickly, "Now can I see my dear papa?"



"Oh! Mamma, that is the other bad man who took the pocket-book."

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A prayer arose from the heart of Christine, "Thank God, he is saved." She little knew that fate was too soon to blast her hopes. Paul was evidently not in line of vision with the child, for at the signal from Gaston he stepped forward with a bound to clasp his child, when she uttered a scream, and clinging to her mother's skirts cried out, "Oh! Mamma, that is the other bad man who took the pocket-book."

"Oh! my God, my child, what have you done?" cried the distracted mother. "Look again, think, you are dealing with his life, he is your father."

"Oh! Mamma, mamma, I did not know, he looks the same, and wore just the same kind of clothes, but it could not have been my dear papa." The child ran quickly to her father's side, and throwing her arms around his neck clung to him, showering kiss, after kiss, upon his face and head, at the same time murmuring words of love for her poor dear papa.

Paul turned a tear-stained face to Gaston, exclaiming, "My God, Monsieur, there is some terrible mystery here, yet I will gladly face death, do anything you may say, all I ask is that you will not condemn me on the word of my innocent child. Think—think when she is old enough to understand, the misery it will be

to her, with her little heart ever crying out, 'you have condemned your poor father for life.' Wait, in the name of Heaven, wait, for other proofs than this." Then turning to Chopard, with his child in his arms, he continued, "Oh! if you are the murderer tell them, at least for the sake of this poor child, that I am not your accomplice."

Chopard drew himself up, and in hard, cold tones answered, "It is impossible for you to be my accomplice, for I am not the murderer." Here Christine, beside herself with grief, turned on the destroyer of her happiness, and in tones of fire denounced him. He turned from her with a low laugh.

Paul continued, "This is your hour, when one word from you would set me free, you refuse to say it, but as there is a Heaven above us, remember my words, though driven an outcast, I leave my fate in a greater power than man's, and when the seal is torn from off those lying lips, you shall speak the words that shall set me free, and to all the world proclaim my innocence."

It seemed almost impossible that Paul Girard, crushed, and broken as he had appeared before, could raise to the strength of an appeal to the cold, cruel man before him, but like the wild beast turned at bay, he fought for his liberty for the sake of his loved ones.

The voice of Jacques was again heard. "Take your places, you must go now." Christine and the child clung to their beloved one and refused to be separated. "Oh! Papa, dear, you are crying," said the little one, "have I done wrong?"

The heart-broken father kissed her wildly as he cried out, "It is some terrible mystery, my darling, but remember that your father is innocent and his last words to you are 'God bless you both.'"

This terrible scene beggars description, it brought tears to the eyes of all, even the guards turned away and deep in the heart of that arch-fiend Chopard there was a pang, for he too was a father. It was well for Christine that she fell unconscious, it spared her the last sight of her beloved husband as he took his place among the prisoners and was remanded back to his cell, there to await his departure with his companions for New Caledonia.

When the courtyard was cleared of the prisoners Maurice brought Julie, who was in the governor's office waiting, and together they took the unfortunate woman and her child back to the place that Julie Marteau now called home.

The picture that Paul carried with him was the form of his broken-hearted, prostrated

wife, and by her side knelt his child, his little Marie, her tiny hands clasped in prayer, her great blue eyes upturned to Heaven. He thought of his dream, and it gave him hope. To that Father above he would try and resign his fate, and trust in His mercy for deliverance.

“He heedeth even the fall of the sparrow.”

CHAPTER XIX.

GRAND BALL OF MARQUISE DE ALVAREZ.

THE day following the events narrated in our last chapter, Chopard was taken under strong guard to the court of appeals, where the commutation of his sentence was formally announced to him.

During the time he had spent as chief clerk in the employ of M. de La Tour, he had made good use of his time, and was a deep student of law.

He knew that with the public sentiment in his favor he would not be executed, and a smile of satisfaction passed over his face, when he heard, "Hard labor for the term of your natural life."

A few days after this the gates of the Grande Roquette swung open, and he was conveyed with Paul Girard, and many more prisoners to the Isle of Ré, from which place the government transport took them on their way to New Caledonia.

Two months had nearly passed, and the daughter for which this wretch was exiled, and

would willingly have given his life, how was it with her? We shall see by going into her home, where happiness should be found, but also too often otherwise.

Madeleine consented, when her husband told her that he intended to throw open the Château for a series of magnificent fêtes, as it was now in the very height of the winter season. She very wisely concluded it would be the best way to gain a large circle of friends and entertaining would help her to forget.

Every wish of hers was gratified, for Gonzago imagined himself, for a time at least, passionately in love with his fair bride. He could not admit to himself that his ardor was the result of the coldness that his wife displayed toward him, or to the, as yet, innocent coquetry in which she indulged.

They led a gay and luxurious life, some pleasure was always in progress, and Madeleine was constantly surrounded by a throng of admirers. They had gathered from the best society in Paris. These idlers were delighted to live in the society of this lovely creature, the charming foreigner who was one of the reigning queens of society, as she had been the favored queen of the stage.

Among the most devoted of her admirers was M. Gaston. His visits to the Château de Alvarez however, were for a far different pur-

pose than friendship, the secret being known only to three persons, Maurice de La Tour, Partout his trusty agent, and himself.

On this particular evening a ball was in progress. The stately mansion, and grounds were brilliantly lighted, the whole interior wreathed, and festooned with garlands of flowers.

The massive conservatory was like a fairy-land, with its rare plants and foliage, clusters of blossoms and vines, through which were hung lanterns, that cast forth soft mellow lights. In one end of the conservatory, the end adjoining the ball-room, and completely covered with a mass of palms and vines, was seated the orchestra, which furnished the most select numbers; the effect being sublime and intoxicating in the extreme.

The ball-room, brilliantly lighted, was large and spacious, and the decorator's art transformed it into a veritable forest, making a brilliant background for the gorgeous, and richly attired guests.

At the other end of the conservatory, was a handsomely furnished room, very much resembling a court, owing to its many arches and alcoves, its massive pillars, gorgeous decorations, and brilliant coloring. It had an air of comfort about it, notwithstanding, and could be entered from the conservatory; massive

arches on either side, leading to other apartments in the mansion.

The room was used for the guests on occasions such as are now described. They could go there to lounge, and rest after the dance, and indulge in *tête-à-tête*, or smoke, if such they desired.

On this momentous night while the dancers were enjoying a whirl to the soft, dreamy strains of melodious music, which seem to issue from the clouds, two of the guests were seated in the room, leisurely smoking.

It soon became evident that they were not there for the same motive as the others, as their conversation will attest. The chief of the police service had solicited the aid of Maurice. It did not take Gaston long to penetrate the secret so well guarded from all others, that the Marquise de Alvarez thought more of M. de La Tour, than she cared to admit.

This was the very channel through which he would proceed, hence we find him at the ball, accompanied by Maurice.

"Do you still hope to connect the Marquise de Alvarez, with the murder of Captain Marteau?" questioned Maurice.

Gaston quickly answered, "I certainly believe she is one of the accomplices. When you consented to visit her, I was in hopes you would discover something that might prove my suspicions correct."

"I have seen nothing to warrant her being the sort of woman you imagine her to be, either in conduct, or conversation," replied Maurice.

"Have you ever spoken of the murder in her presence?" Here Gaston took a full survey of the apartment to make quite sure they were alone.

"Yes, upon one occasion I chanced to mention Paul Girard; her husband, the Marquis, seemed annoyed at the subject and I discontinued it."

"Ah!" exclaimed Gaston, "I sincerely trust you will refer to it again and in my presence, if possible. I would like to note the effect it may have upon them."

"I will do so this very night if an opportunity affords. By the way," he continued, "has your attention ever been attracted to this Floretta, whom I have met here? I believe she is playing a double game. Of one thing I am convinced, she is no friend of the Marquise de Alvarez."

Gaston seemed pleased at Maurice's remark, and said, "Your suspicions are quite correct. We are weaving a strong chain of evidence against her. She is a notorious blackmailer; Partout has been on her tracks for some time."

Here the two men rose, together they wended their way toward the ball-room. The room was soon occupied, however, for Floretta

entered, and threw herself upon the settee. She looked very handsome, her dark beauty being enhanced by a rich robe of yellow satin. There was a wicked gleam in her bold black eyes. "I will separate them," she hissed, "I hate her. He pretends to love me still, I have him in my power and can ruin him; I must separate him from this woman, but how?" She was turning many things in her mind, "If I contrive to separate Maurice de La Tour from Mademoiselle Marteau, he may turn to Madeleine. I have read her secret. It will be easy work to rid myself of her when Gonzago, I mean José, finds that his wife no longer loves him. Then he will marry me, thanks to the game I am playing to that end."

She was interrupted in her reverie by the entrance of Gonzago. He made sure they were alone, and then said in a low tone, "Are you sure M. d' Hennery will pay the commission?"

"Yes," she replied with a low laugh. "I told him the story we had concocted. He defied me at first, but when I told him I would give the information about his wife, and a certain gentleman to the papers, he consented to pay the commission."

During the conversation he had lighted a cigarette, and she was not long in following his example.

Gonzago replied in a nervous manner, "I hope he will pay, for I am spending money like mad."

Floretta gave another low aggravating laugh, as she replied, "Your fair enchantress, your Madeleine, is ruining you. Pity she does not love you in proportion to the sacrifice you are making for her."

The tone of her voice and manner made him ask quickly, "What do you mean?"

"Good Heavens!" she answered blandly, "I had no intention of giving you such a shock. Ah!" she exclaimed, with a dangerous fire in her eyes, "I see you love her passionately. What fools men are, to be sure."

"Tell me," he demanded, "why do you make this remark?"

"My dear Marquis," she replied with marked emphasis on the Marquis, "your love has made you blind. Have you not noticed your wife's decided preference for Maurice de La Tour?"

Gonzago started from his seat, his Spanish blood was fired, "Are you mad?"

The silvery rippling laugh of Madeleine was heard approaching with some of the guests, and Floretta said with a sneer, "Well, here she comes, accompanied by her lover. Your eyes are open now; see for yourself."

Here Madeleine entered with Maurice, Gaston, and a number of guests. They were laughing, and chatting gayly.

She looked radiantly beautiful and queenly, her fine figure appearing almost majestic, in an evening gown with its train, clouds of lace and rare jewels; her shoulders and arms were bare, and looked like sculptured marble.

She was animated by the excitement, her cheeks glowed, her eyes sparkled. For a moment she was happy, without any thought of the future. She was by the side of the man she loved.

She addressed Floretta gayly as she entered the room, "Ah! Floretta, I thought you had gone to the opera?"

Floretta answered with perfect composure, "I changed my mind, preferring to enjoy a cigarette with the dear Marquis." Offering her a cigarette case, she added, "Will you not indulge?"

Madeleine replied in a merry tone, "Excuse me, Mademoiselle, I have no small vices," at which there was a general outburst of laughter. Floretta, thinking it was at her expense, viciously cast the cigarette into the receptacle, and for an instant flashed an angry look, and immediately joined some of the guests who had engaged in a game of cards.

Madeleine was so wrapped in conversation with Maurice, who had seated himself beside her on the sofa, that she was oblivious to her surroundings.

Gonzago stood apart, his eyes turning restlessly toward the couple, and vowing vengeance.

He hated de La Tour, but could find no pretext for showing it. He must shun everything that might show the slightest suspicion.

Gaston joined Floretta, and between all an animated conversation was carried on which soon became general.

The Count de Marcerrini was announced. He was a small sized, dark complexioned man, wore a full beard, parted at the chin, and a mustache curled up at the ends. He was dressed in the height of fashion, and spoke with a pronounced Italian accent. His movements were quick, and he fidgeted with a lorgnette that he wore.

As he was ushered into the room, a look of approval, and satisfaction crossed the features of Gaston. After bowing politely, and speaking with several of the guests, he approached Madeleine, exclaiming in Italian, "*Mia carissima Marchesa*, you look charming to-night and everything is simply magnificent."

Madeleine startled, and extended her hand, in a most gracious manner said, "Ah! Count, a thousand pardons, I did not hear your name announced."

The Count bowed low over the fair white hand, and pressing it to his lips exclaimed, "The privilege of kissing your fair hand

more than atones for the seeming slight." He then joined Gonzago, and continued, "Are they not a handsome couple?"

Gonzago was fired with jealousy. He was thinking if it were true what Floretta had said, but he must wait, wait and be convinced.

Here Floretta came forward, and with a meaning glance at Gonzago said, "My dear Marquise, I think it is cruel of you to monopolize Monsieur de La Tour, when we are all so anxious to have a chat with him. He comes so seldom you know."

There was almost a perceptible start on the part of Madeleine, she felt that this woman had some meaning in her remark, but she was an actress, and equal to the emergency. She very calmly replied with a shrug of her beautiful shoulders, "I was just about to remark to Monsieur de La Tour that I have been informed that his intended marriage with Mademoiselle Marteau is broken off."

Upon this Maurice replied, "No, Madam, not broken off, merely postponed. We have concluded that our future happiness would not be complete, until I had performed a certain sacred duty." He thought this would be the only chance he would have, so he continued, "It is associated with an incident all here probably remember. I mean the terrible affair of the Boulevard Bessières."

Gonzago gave a start which was perceptible to Gaston, and the Count. "Ah!" thought Gaston, "that hit him."

Madeleine answered, "I for one remember the horrible affair," and then with a shudder added, "and the notorious Chopard, what a fiend he must be."

"Oh! yes," exclaimed Floretta, with emphasis. "The famous Chopard is a very interesting person I think. He was transported for life, I believe, with his accomplice, Paul Girard."

"I do not believe in his complicity," replied Maurice warmly. "That man is innocent, I feel certain."

"What has made you so certain of this?" asked Gonzago, a tone of irony in his voice.

"Close study of the case. In my opinion he was condemned chiefly because he was an ex-convict. I am going to try my utmost to prove his innocence, and discover, if possible, the guilty party, who laughs at the law, and may now be squandering the ill-gotten gains, while an innocent man suffers."

Floretta was determined on keeping up the conversation, which she plainly saw was not pleasing to Gonzago. She had suspected that her lover had a secret from her. She was not satisfied as to how he came into an immense fortune, so she asked :

"And you are going to take all this

trouble for a mere stranger whom you scarcely know ? ”

“ The victim of the foul deed, Captain Marteau, was the father of my affianced wife. The wife of Paul Girard has been their trusted servant. He suffers, and it is my duty as an honest man to shorten his sufferings, and I shall fulfill this duty.”

He spoke with a warmth, and determination which brought conviction to the minds of the hearers.

Madeleine sat looking into his face, and not one word of his escaped her. She felt that he was right, for she had read all the evidence published in the papers.

Gonzago found it difficult to appear calm, for the subject under discussion was the last he would imagine at such a time and place.

There was a perceptible sneer upon his handsome face, as he said to Maurice, “ If Paul Girard is innocent, who then is guilty ? ”

Maurice rose from his seat beside Madeleine, and turning directly to the Marquis, answered with much force :

“ To answer that question is the sacred duty I have undertaken, and I am bound to succeed.” The soft strains of music that had continued throughout this whole scene now assumed louder tones, which told that some of the guests were eager to proceed with the dancing.

Maurice turned to Madeleine and offering his arm, respectfully continued, "Marquise, permit me, this is our waltz, I believe."

She rose, took the proffered arm, and they ascended the short steps, entered the conservatory on their way to the ball-room, followed by Gaston, who had offered his arm to Floretta, all the other guests having preceded them.

CHAPTER XX.

THE TWO WOMEN.

WHEN the guests had left the room, Gonzago turned and watched Madeleine as she disappeared, leaning on the arm of the man, he now hated more than ever. His treacherous impulse was to follow, and strike his rival in the back. He gave full play to his expression, thinking himself alone. He was startled by the voice of the Count, as he said, in a calm voice :

“You seem in trouble, Signori? Is what Monsieur de La Tour said, the cause of your agitation? You seemed excited when he spoke of the affair of the Boulevard Bessières.”

“What is that to me; what do you mean?” There was a treacherous gleam in his eyes as he spoke. The Count was prepared to bring the interview to a sudden termination and exclaimed, looking fearlessly :

“I mean that I know you, I mean that you are no more the Marquis de Alvarez, than I am the Count de Marcerrini!”

“Who are you then?”

Another moment the full beard and mus-

tache of the Count were drawn aside, just enough to give evidence that they were false.

"Partout, the police spy!" There was a sudden start and a look of fear upon Gonzago's face, a wild startled gleam in his eyes, as Partout continued:

"I know that you live in this magnificent style, by the aid of a certain 500,000 francs. I am also aware of your partnership with the notorious Floretta Castro."

Gonzago had somewhat recovered, and, at the mention of Floretta turned on the spy quickly, with rage, exclaiming, "You lie!"

Partout answered, "It is useless to deny it, I know everything."

As we already know, Partout was detailed to watch the movements of Madeleine, whom Gaston suspected, simply because she was the one to whom Claude Marteau had left his money.

"Might not some act or unguarded word, give a clue to the third accomplice, which he still believed there was?"

To accomplish anything it was necessary to gain *entrée* to the house of Madeleine, which was done, by Partout donning the disguise of an Italian nobleman.

In watching Madeleine, his attentions were attracted to Floretta, whom he soon discovered to be an adventuress. Later he found that she, and the Marquis de Alvarez were on

very familiar terms, that he was called by her, "Gonzago" when they thought themselves alone.

He was able to assure himself of the partnership of these two, and began to put two and two together, and surmise. "This man is an impostor no doubt, he is the husband of Madeleine de Vallerice, might he not be the third accomplice?" He contrived to keep his suspicion from Gaston for the present, for he was determined if possible, to distinguish himself, and gain all the credit he could. He thought that Madeleine was cognizant of everything, and he took the trouble to inform her by anonymous letters, that it was known that a partnership, to extort money by nefarious means existed. These letters caused Madeleine no little uneasiness, for she could not wholly understand them. She set herself to pry into her husband's secret papers, but in a way he could never suspect, the results of which will be disclosed later.

The actions of the Marquis, at the mention of the murder of the Boulevard Bessi res, which was not noticed by any of the guests, made him certain that his suspicions were correct. He determined to test him, to run the bluff, to use a common phrase.

Gonzago turned upon Partout, his hand flew to his breast pocket, and in an instant a stiletto was drawn, and a quick lunge made, but the

spry little Frenchman was more than a match for him. No sooner was the hand raised, than the weapon was thrust from it to the floor, by a knock from a pistol.

Gonzago stooped quickly to regain possession of the stiletto, but the spy, quick as a cat, placed his foot upon the hand of the would-be assassin, who, with a suppressed oath, and a yell of pain, darted to the other side of the room where he stood easing the bruised hand, and trembling with fear at the pistol Partout leveled at him.

The little Frenchman was master of the situation. He seemed to grow a foot taller, as he exclaimed exultingly :

"At last, I have distinguished myself." He then picked up the stiletto saying, "Captured, a Spanish toothpick. I know your very thoughts, but it wouldn't be advisable, Gonzago."

At the mention of his name, Gonzago was completely staggered, he muttered, "Gonzago, Gonzago," then recovering himself said, "you are mistaken, I am not the person."

"Oh ! I am not mistaken, and you know it, but you see," he added in a tone to gain confidence, "I am not your enemy, or I could have given you over to the police long ago. I wish to make a proposition to you, confess the part you took in the Boulevard Bessières affair,

and"—it was evident that some one was approaching—"We are not alone. Let us step upon the terrace." Partout had already adjusted his false beard, and reassumed his accent.

They had ascended the two wide marble steps, which led out of the room, by way of the conservatory, and also to the main hall, from which long French windows opened upon the terrace, when they were met by Floretta, who playfully took the arm of Gonzago as she said coquettishly :

"Ah! my dear Marquis, I have been searching for you everywhere." She glanced sweetly at Partout, "I am sure the dear Count will excuse you?"

"Ah! certainly, Signorina, certainly," with exaggerated politeness, "he is metal more attractive," and as he withdrew to join the others in the ball-room, he congratulated himself upon his evident success. He was determined to keep his eyes on the turtle doves.

No sooner had Partout disappeared, than the expression of both changed. "You have been eavesdropping," he said to her in a quick anxious tone. "You have overheard all?"

Floretta simply nodded her head, in a manner that indicated she had, and he continued excitedly, "He knows all and must be silenced." Floretta had overheard, her first thought was of her own safety. She was satis-

fied that no arrests would be made for a time at least. If she could manage to get a large sum of money, which was to be paid on the following day, she would make good use of it, by disappearing for a while to other fields.

Her reply to Gonzago was, "You leave it to me, I will manage to fix it up with him, he won't squeal. You have been a fool, to betray yourself in such a manner. I gave you credit for more common sense. Sit down, compose yourself, we will change the subject. This d'Hennerly affair will be settled to-morrow, suppose you waive your claim?"

Gonzago had seated himself upon the sofa; as Floretta finished, he answered with force, "Not a single franc."

Floretta went to the back of the sofa and, putting her arms coaxingly about his neck, drew her face down to his, till their cheeks met. She knew her influence over him, and now was the time to put it to good use.

She ran her white jewelled fingers lovingly through his long hair, and patting his face, said in a winning voice, "Not even for love, my sweetheart? You know I am yours, yours alone. No one to love me but you."

She had won her point. He clasped her in his arms as he rose, exclaiming with great warmth, "Floretta, *mia querida*, you still have the same old power over me! Who could resist your pleadings?"

Just as Floretta entwined her arms about the neck of Gonzago, Madeleine entered from the conservatory.

As her eyes fell upon the scene before her, she stood in perfect amazement, could she believe herself? She could not doubt, as the words of Floretta reached her, and she heard the reply of her husband.

She did not faint or scream. Her pride, her wifehood, and her womanhood were outraged. Her face grew hard and cold, her beautiful lips curled with scorn.

She moved down the steps into the very presence of the guilty pair, who started upon seeing her. Floretta darting like a snake, as if to flee from the room.

With a gesture of command, Madeleine raised her hand, and bade her remain where she was. As she stood before her husband, proud, haughty, her cheeks burning with righteous indignation, her eyes flashing like stars of fire, she looked a perfect queen, before whom the culprit cowered for an instant. Then with an air of bravado he did not feel, he looked at her defiantly, and, snapping his fingers in her face with an exclamation of utter indifference, left the room.

Floretta took in the situation, she knew the game was up, and she secretly rejoiced in having an opportunity to humble this proud woman.



“Her face grew hard and cold, her beautiful lips curled with scorn.”

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Madeleine was to all outward appearances calm. She turned her flashing eyes to Floretta as she demanded, "What does this mean?"

Floretta answered with a cutting, brazen look, lazily drawling out her words, "It means, my dear Marquise, that your devoted husband loves me."

"So, you whom I have sheltered, and befriended, return my kindness by undermining me in the affections of my husband?" retorted Madeleine.

"Oh!" sneered Floretta, "you need put on no grandiloquent airs with me, even though you are his wife. He simply married you, because so many others were determined to win you; I for years have had his love."

Madeleine was shocked at the brazen effrontery of this woman, as she exclaimed, "Love, that word is profanity, from lips such as yours!"

Floretta said in a persuasive manner, "Oh! let me assure you, my dear, that we are partners in love, in business—"

Madeleine interrupted her impatiently. "Enough, I do not believe you have any business with my husband, except the business that comes so natural to women of your class, women who enter a home to defile its sanctity."

"You would change your mind," was the reply, "were I to prove to you, that the little scandal affairs, so very interesting in the papers

about certain society lights, are the very clever work of your charming Marquis and myself."

Madeleine started. She thought to herself, The anonymous letters I have received contain truths. "You mean to say that my husband is your partner in crimes so dastardly?"

"Ah! Marquise, don't clothe it in such strong language. We reap a handsome harvest in which you also share. Perhaps you would like to join us. You," she added sarcastically, "could doubtless give us many pointers."

Madeleine looked at her with perfect disdain, "And you call yourself a woman! For shame! It is such creatures as you, who defame the fair name of woman, and make us blush that we are one of your sex."

Here Floretta uttered a coarse loud laugh, as she repeated the word "blush" then sneeringly added, "You, an actress, and you speak of blushing, bah!"

Madeleine drew herself up with great dignity, as she calmly replied to the insult given, not alone to herself, but to the stage:

"Yes, I was an actress, but regret that I abandoned an honorable profession, for the empty title I now bear." Here her voice took a harder tone as she continued, "It is such things as you, who look down upon the women of the stage, noble women, who are not afraid, or ashamed of work, whose heart,

and hand are ever ready in charity, to help the poor and needy, women strong in their weakness." Here Floretta sneered, Madeleine continued, "I was an actress, yet who dare point at me the finger of scorn? Can you say as much? You are silent." She crossed the room to where the bell cord hung, pulled it, and turning to Floretta, "Now leave my house, never darken its doors again."

Floretta had taken a cigarette from a silver case which hung by a silver chain from her belt, and lighted it, replying, in a tantalizing manner:

"And not say good-night to the dear Marquis? What a pity!"

A footman in bright livery entered, to whom Madeleine gave the command—"Conduct this lady to the door." Then to Floretta she added, "Send your address to my maid, and your effects will be forwarded to you." Floretta mockingly extended her hand, but Madeleine drew herself up indignantly, and without a word pointed to the door.

Floretta laughed coarsely, and, as she followed the footman out of the room, said meaningly, "I'll say *au revoir*, but not good-bye."

Alone, Madeleine seated herself muttering, "So, more of my husband's perfidy is revealed to me." Then with a deep-drawn sigh she continued, "Is it retribution, for the secret love I still nourish? A love that is gnawing

my aching heart!" She suddenly realized that she had absented herself too long from her guests. She rose quickly, crossed to one of the large mirrors, and with an expression of composure, that was simply marvelous, was soon mingling gayly with the guests in the banqueting hall.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BLACKMAILERS.

FLORETTA was correct in her conclusion that Partout would bide his time in giving the information to M. Gaston, the chief of the detective force. She felt sure he would first play for big stakes, keeping herself and the Marquis de Alvarez under constant surveillance.

For some time she had been a guest at the Château de Alvarez, and it was not difficult for her and the Marquis to carry on their nefarious plans and plottings. She was an inveterate smoker, and it was the custom of the two after breakfast, to retire to the smoking room, and indulge in a superior brand to their heart's content. Under the influence of tobacco smoke, which is sometimes a good or evil counselor, they had ample time to form their plans, and arrange them for execution, without fear of interruption from Madeleine, who never missed her morning drive.

Although a guest at the Château, Floretta still retained her apartment on the Rue Suresnes. It was to this place she retired, when politely requested to leave the Château,

The afternoon following the ball, we find her in this domicile discussing affairs with Gonzago, who, having learned of her expulsion, presented himself in a new disguise, under which his partner failed for an instant to recognize him.

The two were more closely united than ever. They had fully discussed the turn of affairs, and now they must be more cautious, they must change their place of meeting, and each time under a different disguise.

They were still plying their trade, as may be inferred, from the conversation.

"I have the pleasure of informing you, that I visited Monsieur d' Hennery this morning; he paid the money,—seventy-five thousand francs."

Here her cruel black eyes glittered, but as Gonzago attempted to interrupt her, she continued, "The other affair, with Monsieur Dabot, you had better follow up without delay, as there is certainly a hundred thousand francs to be made if properly conducted. This man's vices, as you know, place him entirely at our mercy."

It was now Gonzago who became enthusiastic as he exclaimed, "I will take him by surprise, and arrest him myself," he smiled.

"You?" she asked.

"Certainly I, In my disguise, he will take

me for an agent of the *prefecture*, he will try to corrupt me, in order to obtain his liberty, and my silence."

"And you will allow yourself to be bribed, when the figure suits you?"

"Of course, but not until the last moment, when he becomes thoroughly in earnest. One runs no risk with such people, fear binds them hand and foot. Even if they suspect, or discover that they have been tricked by pretended agents, they dare not complain, for fear of exposure."

"Yes, for to confess that they were made to pay hush money, proves them to have been in a tight place. An innocent man protests, defends himself, and refuses to pay blackmail; that is a universally conceded fact." She lighted another cigarette, and lounging back with an attitude of careless ease, her pretty face turned toward Gonzago, she continued the conversation with unutterable tranquility.

"I have some news in regard to Count Deligny."

"Ah! have you seen him?"

"Yes, we are not mistaken in regard to him."

"Is the knowledge pleasing?"

"I leave you to judge," she continued with a smile of satisfaction. "He wished to wrest the information from me immediately, and

without unloosing his purse strings, but I suavely informed him, that with his three or four millions, he could well afford to pay for the knowledge I had to impart."

"You think he will pay it?" asked Gonzago doubtfully.

"There is not the slightest doubt of it." She puffed a cloud of smoke carelessly into the air.

"*Mia amor*, you are a treasure."

"*Mi amor*," she repeated, and continued, "I thought you would soon tire of your odalisque. She is simply beautiful, I admit, but that is all. I am less perfect in form, and even in intellect, but I have a heart." She rose, and, crossing to where he sat, placed her arms about his neck, leaned her soft warm cheek against his, and murmured very softly, "*amor mio!*"

Gonzago was evidently not in a mood for love-making. He scarcely returned the caress, and said almost abruptly—

"Let us cease to speak of our love affairs, and occupy ourselves a little with our personal safety. This M. de La Tour seems interested in Paul Girard."

Floretta was for a moment indignant, at what seemed to her a rebuff, but at the mention of de La Tour, she at once caught the spirit of retaliation.

She answered with sarcasm, "Do not be-

tray yourself, my dear, you forget that you have always refused to enlighten me in regard to the affair of the Boulevard Bessières. It is quite useless now, you may remain silent, I have drawn my own conclusions. My belief is, however, that the handsome de La Tour, will use every means in his power in tracking the real culprit."

Gonzago rose excitedly, and paced the room. "Curse him, I will see that he discontinues his visits to the Château."

Floretta interrupted quickly, "On the contrary, insist that he comes as often as possible, that will avert suspicion. Hence you must be on the alert, and neglect nothing that will serve to gain his favor. I have thought of a scheme."

"What is it?" he asked, stopping in front of where she sat.

"To separate Maurice de La Tour from his affianced wife, Mademoiselle Marteau."

"How can that possibly aid in helping matters? If, as you say, Madeleine is in love with him, I must prevent his visiting at the Château."

"Fool, do you not know that if she really loves him, there are other places besides the Château? A rendezvous is easily arranged. He must be led into a trap, he must fall in love with your beautiful odalisque."

fully. On account of the turn affairs had taken it would not be safe to extend further operations. She must retire, for awhile at least, but not before she had played out the hand she now held.

She would ruin the life of Madeleine, whom she bitterly hated, and other innocent victims were to be her prey.

CHAPTER XXII.

WEDDED YET NOT A WIFE.

THE day following the ball, Madeleine did not go for her morning drive. She did not join her husband at breakfast, but was served by the faithful Suzanne in her own apartment.

She could not bear to look upon the face of the man who had so shamefully dishonored her, even before the time allotted for their honeymoon was half over, and in the home she had hoped, and prayed, she might live down the unfortunate love for another, in administering to the comforts of him she called husband.

True, she loved him not, but she was at least faithful to her vows, and in time might care for him. She thought he really loved her, and that would at least win her respect.

Had she really loved him, she would long since have discovered the relationship existing between him and their guest. She was all honor in her own thoughts, and intentions, and was not a woman at any time, or under any circumstances, to yield to fits of jealousy ; she understood herself too well for that, therefore

she was not jealous, her pride was wounded, and she felt deeply humiliated.

Before Floretta left the Château, she hastily wrote a note, and gave it to the Marquis' valet. When the Marquis had finished his breakfast and morning smoke, which he enjoyed alone with his thoughts, he repaired to his wife's apartments, knocked gently, and entered.

He expected to find her in a state of reproach and excitement, but he was surprised at her calm, cold manner. She reclined on a sumptuous divan wrapped in a soft cream-white *robe de chambre*, her golden hair flowing over her shoulders. One round white arm was thrown in an abandoned manner above her head, while in the other hand was a morning paper.

She did not take her eyes from the paper or deign even a glance as he entered the room, but with a cold "good morning" continued reading.

Her very coldness made her more beautiful, and stirred this guilty wretch to the depths of his craven heart. For the moment, he fancied himself madly in love with her. His nature was like many of his sex, the colder, and more disdainful a woman, the more determined they are to win her, to seize her very heart and soul, to compel her to love, for they

fancy they cannot live without her; but that love once won, they cast it aside like a worn-out glove.

Our reader may for a moment imagine, that an assurance of love, on the part of Madeleine, for her husband, would completely win him, and change his nature. Not so, he was fickle, vain, variable, his love was all fire and passion, for a short time, then burned itself out, it was secondary to greed and avarice. His love for Floretta was only a blind, she was necessary to his nefarious plans, otherwise, he would soon find means to rid himself of her, for his conscience was not over sensitive.

He really loved Madeleine, as much as it was possible for him to love; he also feared her, for the thoughts of her father often crossed his mind.

He tried to induce his wife to speak, to argue, but she maintained a dignified silence, simply saying that she wanted time to think, that she would do nothing hastily. Exasperated by her calmness, he flew into a rage, and left the room.

Madeleine did not linger long in idleness, after the unceremonious departure of her husband. No sooner had he left the Château, than she entered his apartment, to make a thorough inspection, and to find, if possible, some clue to verify her suspicions, also to find

proof of what Floretta had told her, regarding their blackmailing partnership.

This search was kept up for the next few days, during which time she discovered that she was not misinformed.

Madeleine, through all kinds of cunning, and manœuvring, by the aid of her trusted maid Suzanne, was able to obtain keys of all descriptions.

One secret drawer she could not open, no key could be found to fit it. She was not to be outwitted; she was her father's daughter.

She procured some wax, took an impression, and gave the necessary instructions to Suzanne, who had the key made. This consumed a little more time, but she was rewarded, for the lock yielded.

She was right in suspecting that this drawer contained something of extraordinary importance. She found bank notes, to the amount of several thousand francs, and many private matters among them, the papers and documents appertaining to the title and estates of the Marquis de Alvarez. These she carefully read, without the least suspicion of fraud, believing as she did, that her husband was the true, and rightful heir of the Spanish Grandee.

The last paper she opened caused her to look with increased interest. To find the writing of her father among the effects of her

husband, was not to be wondered at, but what was the purport of that writing?

After what had transpired during the last few days, she had no compunction of conscience, but felt it was her duty to investigate thoroughly.

She started to read. With each line she grew more interested, from interest to eagerness, to excitement, to agitation. Great Heavens! what did this mean? Full instructions to be committed to memory by Gonzago, how to act, every move to be made, from the time he left Paris till his return, and marriage with his daughter, concluding with "May Heaven deal with you, as you deal with my child." She read, re-read, from amazement she settled down to calm conviction of the truth. The real Marquis de Alvarez had died ten years ago in Africa, the papers had fallen into the hands of her father, and together he, and his Spanish friend, had arranged to claim the title and estates.

But the money so lavishly spent by her husband, together with the large amount she had found, where did that come from? What other crime had been committed, for in the eyes of Madeleine, her husband was now a criminal to lend himself to such a plot. The papers did not mention the existence of money, only title and estates.

Could he not have disposed of the estates, or some of them? His absence from Paris was not long enough to permit of his transacting much business, such as the sale of vast estates.

Did this affair concern, in any way, the abrupt departure of her father, of whom she had not since heard one word? It doubtless did. She concluded this then explained the letter commanding her to marry José. José? was he not called Gonzago by her father in the instructions she had just read?

Suddenly she recalled that on one occasion, Floretta had playfully called her husband Gonzago.

She remembered that he scowled. Floretta explained that it was the name of an old sweetheart in Spain, and no more was thought of it on her part.

Now it all came back,—he was the old sweetheart. She realized all, also that her own father had deceived her in regard to this man's real name.

She was wedded, but not a wife, for had he not married her under an assumed name? This woman with her keen perceptive powers, and quick wit, had solved part of the mystery of her surroundings.

As her thoughts flew to her father, she recalled their last meeting, and their parting,

her heart ached as she thought that he, too, might be a criminal, for he had written the instructions.

She thought of the cruel deception practised upon her. She had done her father's bidding, what was her reward? Humiliation! Disgrace! In this hour of trial, can we blame her if the man she still loved rose in comparison, with the two nearest her in life, her father and her husband? The former she tried to love, the latter she had sworn to love at the altar.

She carefully replaced the papers, and everything as she had found them, and hastening to her own apartments, she threw herself upon her knees in an agony of despair, as she cried out, "My God! what does it all mean? Why am I so punished?"

This woman once so cold and calm was now in a torrent of grief and despair, a future of disgrace loomed up before her, she was very proud, commanded the respect of the world, what would be the end?

"Stay, bright and blest delusion,
Plunge not my soul in dread;
What matters wealth's profusion
When the heart is dead?
By friends and love forsaken,
Can aught their place supply?
When hope no more can waken,
'Tis happiness to die.

EXILED BY THE WORLD.

" Oh ! world of heavenly lightness,
The mind's ecstatic joy ;
Why, waking from thy brightness,
Should truth the charm destroy ?
If falsehood hope can borrow,
And friends and love restore ;
To this cold world of sorrow,
Oh, let me wake no more ! "

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FLOATING TIGER.

WHILE affairs were transpiring in Paris as we have seen, how fared it with Chopard and Paul Girard? We left them started on their long journey to New Caledonia, where they had been transported to hard labor for life.

They had reached the Isle of Ré, where their sojourn was very short; from the Isle of Ré, they were conducted to the Isle of Aix, at the mouth of the Charente, where barges soon arrived to convey them to the government frigate, *The Floating Tiger*, which was to finally transport them from France to New Caledonia.

The majority of the prisoners witnessed this last departure with delight, they laughed, sang, joked, and tossed their caps in the air. Nothing could calm their excitement, not even the punishment inflicted upon them, nor the blows distributed promiscuously, here and there among the crowd.

As soon as all the prisoners were on deck, the inspector Monsieur Belfort, proceeded to call the roll, as they all formed a double file.

They numbered three hundred men, some condemned for life, others for shorter terms.

While these preliminaries were in progress, the officers' shrill whistles were resounding on every side. The marines formed on deck, with their guns on their shoulders, the crew ran to and fro, in obedience to the commands of the officers; the anchor was hoisted, the sails were set. They were leaving the shore, to undertake a voyage of several months, and one, which the most experienced mariners, unite in regarding as terrible.

The prison was under the deck, in that part of the ship known as the battery. Imagine a long gallery very narrow, with low ceilings, lined on either side with four long iron cages, identical in every respect, with those in which wild beasts are confined.

These are fastened to the sides of the ship, lighted by portholes, and protected by heavy iron bars. The entire three hundred prisoners had to be crowded in these four cages.

They take infinitely greater precautions with these men, than with wild animals shut up in menageries, for two loaded cannons stand at the end of the gallery, pointing directly to them, to say nothing of the guards, stationed in the center of the gallery, in a sort of round house near the main-mast.

It was necessary to take these precautions,

they were indispensable to the safety of the ship and crew. If the discipline was relaxed for an instant, if a revolt had the slightest chance of success, there would be a terrible awakening; for the majority of the prisoners were desperate characters.

The confusion and disorder prevailing among the prisoners when the weather was bad, was indescribable, huddled as they were in such a small space.

Those who became weary of lying on the floor, or of remaining in a sitting posture, with their backs against the iron bars, sometimes attempted to stand erect, but almost invariably rolled over upon the other half of poor crouching, drowsy wretches. Sleep was almost out of the question in such a space, while some closed their eyes, others shouted to one another. Then there was the tramp of the crew upon the deck overhead, and the sentinels as they paced to and fro. It was living torture to the unfortunate wretches, and no wonder they were half crazed, or some of them stupefied.

The only recreation allowed them was two hours each day to promenade the deck, when the weather was good. This had been denied them, on account of the bad weather they had encountered, so they were shut up in their cages, where almost total darkness

prevailed, for the portholes and hatches, through which light and air were supplied, had to be kept closed for fear of shipping a sea.

The weather gradually cleared, the ocean became calmer, the promenades on deck were resumed, and the portholes opened.

Chopard and Paul Girard occupied the same cage. Girard had suffered much during the earlier part of his voyage, as it was his first experience on the sea. His physical suffering, however, could not compare with his mental agony, surrounded as he was with such comrades. His heart was yearning for his loved ones, as he felt that every bound of that great ship was lengthening the space between them. He tried to resign himself, and in a measure succeeded, for he had been given a religious training in his youth, and the prayers he had lisped at his mother's knee, had served to console him in his bitter exile; he knew that his good wife, and his little Marie, would never cease to pray for him. He did not dare to hope for deliverance from his terrible doom, he was poor, and had no powerful friends to work in his interest.

He tried to console himself with the thought, that God would shorten his life, that his poor heart-broken Christine would learn of it, and find comfort in the knowledge that his suffer-

ings were ended. Till such times, he would be a man and bear up as best he could.

Chopard suffered less than any one during the voyage. He claimed, that the many voyages made during his youth, had accustomed him to the hardships. He was always in good humor, and found amusement in everything—noise, want of sleep, often scanty food; nothing troubled him, he seemed to find everything to his satisfaction. He compared his present conditions as a paradise in comparison to his past life.

The other prisoners felt that he was certainly their superior in education, and intelligence, that he was familiar with the foreign land to which they were going, and that he could be of great assistance to those whom he was inclined to take under his protection.

They all gathered around him when he commenced to speak, and listened to him without interruption, but not one dared attempt the least familiarity with him, most of them always addressing him as Monsieur Chopard.

The history of his trial was known to all on board, and he still persisted in his innocence, many of them began to believe it, even the officers and crew had their doubts.

He wrote letters for such of the prisoners who could not write, and promised to forward them to Europe, as soon as they reached some port.

His behavior was exemplary, his penmanship and skill were undoubted. The commander of the ship proposed to entrust him with the copying of reports, and the keeping of the books, but he refused, saying, "I do not wish to leave my comrades, they need me. I can advise, console, and encourage them; also exhort them to be patient and resigned. Why should I serve those who are taking me into exile, punishing me for a crime I did not commit?"

They little knew the man with whom they had to deal, the same cunning that had outwitted justice and saved him from the scaffold was still at work.

He had gained the confidence of the officers, and above all, had rendered all the assistance possible to his fellow prisoners, often dividing his own share of food and wine among them.

While waiting for the moment of action to arrive, he realized that it would enable him to attempt some great undertaking later, to form some plan of escape, no matter at what cost, so he might again reach France, where, in some disguise, he might watch over his beloved Madeleine, who haunted his thoughts, sleeping or waking.

He had already formed his plan; it only needed the co-operation of his companions, to put it into execution. It was a daring one,

and not likely to succeed, but he was in a desperate state of mind, though to all appearances calm, and resigned.

If Madeleine de Vallerice exhibited great self control, it was an inheritance from her father.

CHAPTER XXIV.

REVOLT.

THE *Floating Tiger*, with its freight of human cargo, was approaching the Island of Teneriffe, the largest of the Canaries, near the coast of Africa.

The day had dawned pleasant with a bright sun, but as it advanced toward the afternoon, the clouds seemed to be gathering, which betokened a storm.

The prisoners were formed into different gangs, each gang numbered, and having a regular time to promenade on deck, when the weather permitted, and in order to give some exercise to the prisoners, it was customary to have a certain amount of work for them to do while on deck.

On this particular afternoon, gang No. 5 were taking their exercise on deck, among which were Chopard and Paul Girard.

All the prisoners were dressed alike, with the regulation gray garbs, the only difference in these were, that interwoven through the gray material of each were the initials "T. F." (*Tra-vaux forcés*) in red letters.

They did not work with much spirit or animation, showing a marked contrast to the merry, light-hearted sailors, running hither and thither, hauling ropes, and humming or singing a gay song.

One tall, lean, lanky fellow called Grégoire, too lazy to put one foot before the other, was pushing a mop before him, and as an inspector called out, "Work up, you fellows, it's near time to go below," he grumbled out, each word an effort, "Well, this is the worst convict ship I ever sailed in. I say, fellows, did you ever take a worse trip?"

A chorus of voices answered, "No, never."

Grégoire continued, "No accommodations, bad grub, beds abominable, no clean towels, cabins draughty, ventilation imperfect."

He was interrupted by Chopard, who cut short his grumbling, "Can't expect improvements, the whole affair is government monopoly."

Paul was standing near one of the masts, gazing into the sea, his thoughts far away with his beloved ones.

As he thought of the life of drudgery which stretched out before him, with only murderers for his companions, his very soul cried out, "My God, it is enough to drive me mad! Oh! if I could but hear from my poor wife and child."

Chopard had been watching him for some time, and said to himself, "Poor devil, I begin to pity him." He approached Paul and in an abrupt manner said, "You seem dejected, Girard, you are thinking of the woman you love, your wife?"

Girard started and looking at Chopard with surprise said, "Ah! do not mock me."

"I am not mocking you," hastily replied the other, then, with a quick glance about, to make sure no one was within earshot, he continued, "What do you think of our plan of escape?"

"Ah!" replied Paul, "that is all very well, you may leap into the water, but even if you are not re-captured, or shot, you will be eaten by the sharks, or have your brains dashed out against the rocks."

"Oh! you are encouraging," Chopard answered, with a shrug of his ugly shoulders, "still I dare say you would rather I go, dead or alive, to be rid of me forever?"

"What interest have I in your life or death?"

Chopard with a sudden thought stepped nearer to Paul, and, lowering his voice, said, "Girard, would you risk your life for liberty?"

Paul raised his eyes for an instant to Heaven, as he exclaimed, "Ah, that I would! Liberty! What is sweeter in life than liberty? Yes,"

he added, "liberty is life itself, but not, if it brings with it disgrace."

"You moved my heart once, Girard; I shall never forget it. That unhappy day when you pleaded to me, with your child in your arms, fearful though that parting was, it has proved your salvation. You shall see your wife and child again."

"I shall see them again? Oh! do not mock me, I implore you."

"You shall see them again," he continued; "Live with that hope, and trust in me. Ah! I know what it is to love."

These last words were uttered with such depth of soul and feeling that Paul looked in astonishment. He could scarcely believe his eyes, the hard sinister face of Chopard had softened, his whole countenance seemed changed as if by magic.

Paul could not disguise his astonishment, as he asked doubtingly, "You? You know what it is to love?"

"Yes I. And with a devotion terrible as it is sacred. I loved my wife, and had she been spared, I would not have become the cold, crafty fiend I am. When she died," here his voice was choked with suppressed emotion, which seemed beyond the power of this heretofore heartless man, he continued, "When she died, the only being left to me to

love was my child. It is to that love, that I have sacrificed my life, my very soul. A presentiment tells me that my child—my Madeleine—bless her, is in danger, that her life is threatened by a traitor, and that I, her father, must reach France at any cost, to protect her, and to punish him. To accomplish this, you must go with me.”

Paul made a movement as if to remonstrate, but was interrupted by Chopard. “Nay, but you shall. It not only means wife, child, and liberty, but your innocence proclaimed to the world.”

Paul seemed dazed, he could not realize. He put his hand over his eyes, as if to recall his reason, as he murmured, “Is it all a dream?”

“That dream shall be realized, in half an hour you shall be free.” He shaded his eyes with his hands as he looked off, and continued, “We are now in sight of Teneriffe, the coast is very treacherous here about, and a storm is rising.”

Even as he spoke, the clouds were gathering, the lightning shot at intervals through the spars and masts.

Teneriffe now appeared plainly in the distance, they had approached very rapidly, and its volcanic peak, as high as the loftiest mountain, was plainly discernible against the clouds. On closer observation the city of Santa Cruz could be seen.

"Oh! if I could only trust him," thought Paul, "has he not already ruined me, to save some one else? Perhaps now he has some evil motive in seeking my aid for his escape."

Chopard gave a signal which his companions seemed to understand, and they gathered around him.

"Now listen," he said hurriedly, "we will soon be called to go below. I will give the signal for the attack, it's the prettiest plot you ever heard of."

"A revolt!" exclaimed Paul. "What's to be the signal?"

"A shot from a sentry's gun, in the air." Just then a warden approached, and he continued under his breath, "The warden, be off, he might suspect." He then laughed loudly as he continued, "Well, that is the best thing I ever heard in my life; Girard says, the next time he takes the trip, he will travel first class, with cabin passage."

They all understood, and joined in the laughter. Chopard passed close by Paul, and said in a low whisper, "Keep by me now, Girard, the time draws near; if we succeed in escaping, we have a long and dangerous swim before reaching the mainland, but once in the desert of Sahara, we will have nothing to fear, but the hunger, thirst and fatigue, I have already told you about."

"It is a desperate chance to take, but anything is better than this life of slavery," was Paul's reply, as he nerved himself for what might come.

Here the threatened storm burst forth in all its fury, the rain fell in torrents, as if weeping for the wretched souls so soon to be cast into Eternity. The lightning flashed, the thunder roared and crashed, the ship was rolled by the angry troubled waves, which seemed at any moment to rend her in pieces. There was a terrible commotion as the inspector gave the command in a loud voice. They formed in a line, as quickly as the wild confusion would allow, Chopard and Paul bringing up in the rear.

All of a sudden Chopard started with fiend-like fierceness and swiftness, and tearing the rifle from one of the warden's grasp, fired it into the air, in less time than it takes to read it. A general revolt ensued, the convicts rushed upon the wardens and hurled them to the deck. Two of the mariners seized Chopard, but he threw them aside as if they were children.

Paul made a rush for the bulwarks, and with a prayer on his lips for his wife and child, leaped into the dark angry waters.

Chopard saw his actions, and made a dash in the same direction, exclaiming as he sprang



The Floating Tiger."—"Midnight around the ship no light to save,
Night shadows in the Heart, on life's sea astray."

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over the bulwarks, "Madeleine, my child, I am coming to thee." Several of the mariners fired at him as he disappeared.

The confusion that followed was indescribable, many of the convicts sprang into the ocean, only to be shot by the mariners. The storm still raged; just when the excitement was at its height, a thunder bolt struck the main mast down the hatchway, leading into the battery below deck, cleaving the ship in twain, and firing her at the same time.

The poor unfortunate wretches caged behind the iron bars, together with the sentinels on guard, sent up a howl of despair, which was soon hushed forever by the angry waves, or the raging flames, which shot up, and seemed to vie in their lurid shafts of fire, with the lightning, which continued to illumine the ocean for miles around, showing in the distance the volcano. (This volcano has been dormant since 1798.)

The bodies of the dead were carried by the waves, the moans of the dying were lost in the terrible noise of the elements; those not drowned were burned alive on the ill-fated ship.

Chopard, being an expert swimmer, had not exhausted himself by trying to battle with the sea, he kept afloat, and allowed himself to be carried by the waves, until he could secure something upon which to cling. Before a

great while, he was fortunate in securing a piece of a spar, which he mounted, then, raising his powerful voice, he called the name of Paul Girard, hoping to locate him alive, as the bodies of the dead were floating on all sides.

"Courage, Girard, courage," he shouted, "where are you?"

He was answered by a faint voice not far away, who cried out in despair, "My strength fails me."

Chopard looked in the direction from whence the voice came, and recognized Paul struggling only a short distance from him. Relaxing his hold on the spar, two or three bold strokes brought him to his side. He seized the exhausted man in his powerful grasp, and looked about for another piece of débris, upon which to support himself and companion, who was fast becoming, if not already, unconscious.

Soon a piece of mast floated toward him, even larger than the one he had deserted. He succeeded in raising Paul to temporary safety, at the same time securing his own, and realizing his fearful predicament, he raised his eyes to Heaven, and with all the fervor of his terrible nature cried out, "For the first time in my life, my God! I call upon Thee!"

A ship was wrecked one midnight drear
Out on the ocean in sight of land;
Its burden was made of hope and fear,
Smiles, joy and laughter were in the band;

But it shivered and moaned as the sun went down,
 The brave ship trembled from stem to stern
 'Neath the wail of the tempest and Heaven's frown—

As it followed the tide in its ebb and flow,
 Many a storm o'er the ship had raged;
 Naught else had it done but to bend to the blow—
 As the thunder roared, like wild beasts caged—
 Onward it went but ever to know
 That if trust, love and life had been but so,
 'Twould never have wrecked, 'neath the ocean's throe.

Light, hope and life went out that night,
 Drowned by the voice of the wind in its wail;
 And the dark hull floated a pitiful sight,
 As the lightning played 'mid its cordage and sail;
 Out in the midst of a moonless sea
 It had lost its moorings and drifted away,
 While the bright flames sported in pitiless glee
 'Mid its white wings, draggled and burnt in the fray.

Love, hope and faith sailed on the dark wave,
 Love and hope sank 'neath the waters so gray;
 Midnight around the ship, no light to save—
 Night's shadows in the heart on life's sea astray.
 So the vessel and cargo and all went down
 With many a sigh and full many a tear;
 No haven was reached on its earthly tour,
 Faith alone looked up, and a harbor drew near
 As she floated away to the heavenly shore.

A life was the ship that was wrecked that night
 On the pinions of fate floating down to despair;
 It sailed into darkness from out the sun's light
 Bravely to battle, to do, and to dare;
 One moment it trembled and shrunk in dismay
 Before the wild tempest it met on the way
 When lo! faith had conquered—Heaven was in view,
 The clouds burst asunder, the sky shone anew
 And a glorious light the dark ocean o'erspread
 As the ship sank to rest in its watery bed.

CHAPTER XXV.

ONLY A WOMAN'S HEART.

THE winter festivities in the social world of Paris were drawing to a close, it was approaching the Lenten season.

It was the custom of the Marquis and Marquise de Alvarez, to hold a weekly reception at their Château, and, although there was serious trouble between the two, they must not let the outside world know.

The life and happiness of Madeleine was now under a cloud, but she must suffer on, she must hide her sorrows, and assume a gaiety of manner she did not feel. How long it would last, she knew not; she only knew that her husband, each day, grew more repulsive to her, as she learned his true nature, which revealed itself in his threats and insults.

She knew that her position was a false one, the title and name which she bore, she had no just claim to. It was agony for her to live this life of deceit. But what was she to do? Could she renounce it all, this woman, with her proud noble nature, knowing too, that it would reflect so greatly on her father? She could not bear the thought.

She could only live on in the deception and mystery, in which she was surrounded. She guarded carefully from her husband the discoveries she had made, and he believed himself secure in his secret. He followed the advice of Floretta, and had managed to evade the police spy Partout, but he knew it must come sooner or later, and the nervous strain and fear, under which he labored, did not tend to make his home life more amiable; Madeleine's continued coolness and calmness also irritated him.

Maurice de La Tour had not called at the Château, since the night of the ball. As the evening of the final reception of the season approached, she sent him a special invitation, asking him to call. Why she did so, she could not tell, she would not even admit to herself, that she still loved him, but there was a yearning to see him, to speak with him, she could not resist.

Before her continually arose the image of this one man, noble and earnest as he was. She felt that he purposely avoided her on account of her former connection with Claude Marteau, the uncle of his affianced wife. She was determined if possible to interview him on the subject, that, knowing the truth, he might think less harshly of her.

The evening of the reception was at hand,

the Château and grounds were lighted up quite as brilliantly, as on the occasion of the ball earlier in the season, and after the reception dancing was to be a feature of the evening.

Madeleine's friends and admirers as of old came in goodly numbers, for they still flickered about her, as the moths about the flame. Among them was M. Gaston, Maurice de La Tour, and our friend the Count de Marcerrini, as Partout still continued his disguise on such occasions. He had kept his previous interview with the Marquis from Gaston, but he was determined to wait no longer, and must contrive this very night, to bring about some kind of a settlement or understanding.

Madeleine looked superbly lovely in a reception gown of the latest Parisian fashion, her cold, haughty dignity made her appear even more queenly than usual, but the low musical laugh so much admired, seemed forced, and a close observer might detect a slight drooping at the corners of her beautiful mouth, denoting suppressed sorrow.

Most of the guests had already arrived, some formed in groups at a friendly game of cards, others had gathered about the piano, and were enjoying the music, while others again indulged in a *tête-à-tête*, when the footman announced Mademoiselle Floretta Castro.

She made sure to wait till the guests had arrived, before daring to intrude into the presence of the woman whom she had so wronged, knowing, that before the guests, she was safe to remain.

Madeleine was indignant at the bold and daring effrontery of this woman, and her first impulse was to order her immediate expulsion, but her grievance with this creature must not mar the pleasure of her guests, she must bide her time. She could not bring herself, however, to take the hand Floretta gayly offered, as she entered the room, she simply inclined her head coldly, and turning continued her conversation with M. de La Tour.

Floretta approached the Marquis at the same time exclaiming, "My dear Marquis, it was so good of you to insist upon my coming. I'm sure I will enjoy the dear Marquise's reception, as it is to be the last of the season, and I could not think of missing it."

These words reached Madeleine, and she understood their motive,—that she might fully understand that her husband was still a constant visitor to his Spanish sweetheart. All the indignation in her nature was now aroused ; she was satisfied of the intimacy between the two, but to have it flaunted in her face, before her guests, was more than she could bear.

What wonder then, that this woman with

her sensitive nature, and wounded pride, should turn to another, and above all others, to the man whom she loved ?

The strains of the orchestra were heard from the ball-room, and most of those assembled in the great drawing-room caught the spirit of the dance, and hastened to enjoy it, while others strolled through the conservatory.

Madeleine thought that no better opportunity than the present could occur, and, taking the arm of Maurice, she led him, in a fit of desperation, through the conservatory, to the large anti-room, already described in a previous chapter. She motioned him to a chair, then seated herself on the sofa near by.

After an effort to steady her voice, for she was wrought to a nervous excitement by the events of the evening, events which did not escape the notice of Gaston and Maurice, she began the conversation :

“ You have doubtless been informed, Monsieur, that Mademoiselle Marteau’s uncle made me his heiress, without having any right to the property ? That is true in a measure. I had been obliged to earn my living on the stage, an honorable man came to me, and said, ‘ I know you to be an honest girl, permit me to see you often ; some day, perhaps you will forget my age, and consent to bear my name.’ I refused at first, as I was sure I could never love him

as a husband. The months passed by, his devotion was so persistent and honorable, that at last I consented to marry him. Within a few days set for the wedding, he died. His will was opened, and it was found that he had left his entire fortune to me. What could be more natural, than he should leave all to the woman who was so soon to become his wife?" She paused, seeing he did not reply, she continued, "Did I do so very wrong to accept it? Who would not under the circumstances?"

"But his brother and niece," replied Maurice.

"I was not aware that he had natural heirs living, and had they come to me, I would gladly have consented to accept only a portion of the legacy, and turn the rest over to them, for I could continue to earn money in my profession. Instead of trying to communicate with me, they declared war against me, even intimating that the will was a forgery. My friends became indignant and solicitous for my honor, and advised me to defend myself to the last. As you well know, I obeyed them, and lost, being obliged to pay heavy costs."

Maurice remained silent.

"Should my conduct in this matter be so severely censured? Have I sinned so deeply that you should regard me with aversion? My relations with Claude Marteau were those of

truth and honor, I assure you. I am indebted to you greatly, if you did not save my life, you certainly rescued me from a terrible danger, you have won my gratitude, and it pains me that you will not allow me to testify it."

She rose, and approached nearer to him, and in a faltering voice added, "This explanation was due you, I owed it to myself; may I hope that you are now convinced, have you a better opinion of me now than before?"

Maurice had listened to her every word, and her earnest, straightforward manner convinced him that she spoke the truth, and that Monsieur Gaston was most unjust in his suspicions of her.

"I have never had a bad opinion of you, Madame," he answered, "I had a prejudice, which was quite natural, your explanation has entirely dispelled that."

These simple words from Maurice seemed to touch her very soul, they were as a message of sympathy, from the one she loved. She lifted her great dewy eyes to his, and murmured, "Then you will no longer avoid me, and treat me as an enemy?"

"I have never treated you as an enemy, Madame," he responded.

"Very true," she replied with a faint smile, "but you have displayed an indifference, which was more exasperating than even your hatred

could have been. I hope now to see you often at my Château?"

Maurice did not wish to wound her by a decided refusal, he preferred rather to interrogate her, and replied:

"Why should you wish to desire my visits, Madame? I do not belong to your Parisian world, I am almost ignorant of its customs."

She approached so near, that she could lay her hand upon his shoulder. He rose, as he continued carelessly, "I fear want of leisure will compel me to decline."

She could not resist the impulse, and placing her soft white hands on his, that rested on the back of the chair, and bestowing on him a penetrating nervous look, she said, "Be it so; my receptions weary you, my friends displease you, henceforth, when you come, I will close my doors to all other visitors."

As the words fell from the lips of this beautiful woman, there was no disguising the truth, her soul was in her voice, in her pleading tones, but the pure love of Julie rose before him.

The magnetic atmosphere which surrounded him, which most men could not resist, the subtle charms of this accomplished woman, the delicate perfume that emanated from her, were lost upon him.

He simply repeated, "That want of leisure would prevent his continued visits." Then with sudden thought she exclaimed:

“ Ah! I see how it is, you do not wish to visit her, who was once Madeleine de Vallerice, the actress?” He gazed at her without even unclosing his lips, and stood silent and cold, even haughty.

She waited an instant for a response, and seeing that he did not intend to speak, she suddenly turned, as she cried out in despair :

“ This is too much ! too much ! Farewell !” and hurried to leave the room. Maurice immediately detained her, for a moment he was at a loss to understand the true meaning of her words and actions.

“ Madame,” he quickly said, “ I do not understand.”

At the sound of his voice she turned, and, springing with the grace and quickness of a panther to his side, she seized his hands in a frenzy of excitement, exclaiming desperately, in an almost breathless undertone—

“ Do you not understand that I love you ?”

My dear reader, do not judge harshly. This woman had fought against her all absorbing love for this man. She had suffered through those, whose duty it was to make her life bearable. If, in her sorrow, she had sacrificed the last vestige of womanly pride, if she did not recoil from the most palpable advances, it was because she loved him, and love excuses many sins.

True he had given her no encouragement. He was the promised husband of another, but in her misery, she thought only of him ; her heart was yearning for his love, his sympathy, his pity, he was her king.

Imagine yourself in her position, do not censure, she was but human, and to forgive is Godlike.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MADELEINE'S PROMISE.

THE man to whom a woman, and especially a beautiful voluptuous one, suddenly makes such a transparent avowal, when he has any reason whatever for remaining insensible to it, finds himself in an extremely delicate position.

I do not believe the female sex alone, should have a monopoly on virtue, for we occasionally find men, rare cases I admit, who have a perfect right to defend themselves on this question.

In the case of Maurice de La Tour, his love for Julie gave him strength and courage to defend himself. Instead of falling into the arms of the Marquise de Alvarez, as many would certainly have done, he had but one thought, to escape from her grasp, and appeal to the woman's better nature.

He led her gently to an arm-chair, and remained standing beside her, as he spoke in a low, calm, firm voice, which penetrated to the very depths of her heart.

"You are mistaken, Madeleine, if I may presume to address you by that name. You do not love me, it is merely the caprice of a too

vivid imagination, and your surroundings, which are, in my opinion, foreign to your naturally refined and sensitive nature."

She looked up at him, her soul shone in her dark eyes, the rich crimson flush now suffused her entire face, even to the roots of her fair hair. He continued gently, but firmly, trying to calm her excitement. "It would be unworthy of you, and of me, to yield to such a caprice. Do not suppose that I am insensible of your beauty, it is wonderful. I cannot find words to describe it, and above all, do not think me a model of virtue, but," he continued, "you are not one of those women to be lightly taken up to-day, and as lightly cast aside to-morrow; you value and respect yourself too highly for that, and so do I."

She looked at him, not in anger, but astonishment, his language was entirely new to her, she replied impulsively, "Still I cannot reconcile myself to the thought, that I shall never see you again."

He seated himself near her, and ventured to place his cold hands upon her burning ones, as he continued seriously, "I rescued you once from one peril; I should fail in my duty as a preserver, if I plunged you into another; it could only result in an intrigue, that could not be continued."

She seemed to grasp the full meaning of his

words, after a struggle, becoming more composed, she lifted her eyes slowly to his as if in resigned despair :

"I regret my indiscretion—forgive me, can you not even be my friend?"

He replied gently, "Friendship is the best and truest of relations, but it does not spring up in a moment. It is a sympathy born, then it grows, and finally develops into a lasting affection; friendship must be merited, I have done nothing to deserve yours."

"You are mistaken," she rejoined, "you deserve it by the language you addressed to me a moment ago."

With a far off look in her eyes, that had now become moist with the gathered tears, she continued, in a sad soulful voice, "Ah! my friend, if you but knew my life; I have not been accustomed to hear such noble sentiments expressed. I never knew a mother's love, she died in giving me birth. My father, ah! well, he loves me in his way, no doubt, but I seldom see him, he is always travelling."

Maurice could not help feeling a deep interest and sympathy for this beautiful, sorrowing woman, he would not be human, did he not; he now realized that she was very unhappy.

"But your husband, the Marquis de Alvarez?"

She interrupted him impatiently at the

mention of that name. "I married the Marquis de Alvarez, hoping to forget my love for you, and by the command of my father. It was a fatal step, for if there is any good in his nature, he conceals it utterly, whilst you, instead of plying me with the compliments with which I am surfeited, choose a more generous theme. You defend a man whom a jury has condemned of a fearful crime. I have listened to you with all my soul, your earnest words are engraven upon my heart, looking into your eyes, I saw an energy and fire, that I had never seen before."

Maurice listened as she referred to Paul Girard, for he was the person to whom she had alluded. A sudden thought struck him. What if he could enlist this woman in the interest of Girard? She had powerful friends, besides it would be a test, to prove to Gaston, that this woman is innocent of his suspicions.

He rose abruptly, and bending over her, "You say I have deserved your friendship and regard, very well, I accept it gladly; but you have not deserved mine, do you wish to merit it?"

She hastily rose, and looking into his clear honest eyes said,

"I will do anything you ask, make any sacrifice, only speak?"

"This man, Paul Girard, has been transported for life. I believe him to be innocent."

"Then that is enough for me," she added quickly, "I too believe it."

"The wife of the unfortunate man is in despair, his little child Marie, whom you once met, is pining for the father who yearns to clasp his darling to his heart, a free man."

"I have often thought of that child; it was her sweet voice, and pure kiss, that drove hatred from my heart on that memorable night, when I saw you by the side of the woman you love." Her voice trembled visibly as she uttered the last sentence.

He did not wish to continue on that point.

"Paul Girard must be rescued from the prison that holds him captive; will you aid me in the task?"

"Yes, I will; can you give me any clue to work upon?"

"I can send you some papers which may be of service. If I obtain any new clues, I will immediately inform you. Help me to find Chopard's real accomplice; if you take the field, you are certain of success, for you have powerful friends."

"Friends," she repeated, with something like a sneer. "My friends will be of no service to me in this affair, they are not equal to a task like this, but you may depend upon me."

"You doubtless hope for your husband's aid?" he inquired.

"His aid? Could I expect my husband's aid in a matter requiring courage and devotion? You do not know him. No," she added emphatically, "I will seek unaided by man, but with God's help, I will succeed."

She raised her eyes, as if to register the vow above, it was a sacred promise made to the man she loved.

Maurice was not without noticing this, and he felt that she would, if possible, fulfill that promise. He took from his pocket a bundle of papers, from among them he drew forth a small photograph. Giving it to Madeleine he said, "This is a portrait of Paul Girard, it may aid you in some way."

The moment she looked at the picture, she started, and turned deathly pale. "This is Paul Girard?" she asked.

Maurice assured her that it was, but as he was looking through the papers he had in his hands, he did not notice her agitation, or hear her as she muttered,

"Merciful Heaven! Can my suspicions be correct?"

Maurice continued, "It was taken in the clothes which he wore while serving out his first sentence at Orleans, before he was convicted as the accomplice of Chopard. Such clothes he wore on the night of the murder." He turned to Madeleine as he spoke, just in

time to catch her as she reeled, and was about to fall. "Madeleine, you are ill? I will call for assistance." At the same time placing her in a armchair close by.

She tried hard to resume her strength and calmness by detaining him. "No, it is nothing but a slight faintness, that is all."

He did not suspect the real cause of her sudden collapse, and attributed it to the excitement through which she had passed a few moments before. He continued, quite alarmed, "But you look exhausted—weary?"

"Yes, weary, that is it." Then realizing that their interview had lasted some time, and her absence might be remarked by some of the guests, she struggled to her feet saying, "It grows late, you must join the others, or our absence may be commented upon; you have my promise, so good-night."

Maurice was not sorry to end an interview, which he was not likely soon to forget. Upon leaving, he inquired, "Should you make any discoveries, you will communicate with me?"

"I will in that case immediately call upon you, at your office."

He handed her his card, and taking her hand politely, he bowed with reverence, for he could not forget even though he could never return her passion, that this woman loved him, with her whole heart and soul. As their eyes

met, he said, " You have my everlasting friendship ; good-night."

A few minutes later he was seated in a coupé, on his way to his apartments, thinking of Madeleine? No, of Julie.

CHAPTER XXVII.

DENOUNCED.

FLORETTA had her own motive in daring to intrude herself into the presence of Madeleine. She thought it quite possible, that Maurice de La Tour would be there, and did not wish to lose a chance to fire the jealousy of Gonzago. She saw the moment approaching when he, alienated from his wife, completely cured of any vestige of love for her, would be her own, not only her partner, but her lover just as he had been in Spain, before Madeleine had come between them.

She observed that Madeleine and Maurice were not in the ball-room with the guests. It did not take her long to discover their whereabouts, and secrete herself in the conservatory where she could see them, and hoped to hear their conversation, but in the latter, she was doomed to disappointment. She waited till she thought the interview would soon end, then, rejoining Gonzago, she boldly said :

"Your charming Madeleine is carrying on an intrigue with Monsieur de La Tour, they have been enjoying a secret interview for

some time; I thought it might interest you to know."

Observing the sudden pallor and rage that overspread his face, she feared there might be an unpleasant scene, and she would not dare to face Madeleine again that night. Without another word she turned, and left the ball-room, and was soon in her apartments on the Rue Suresnes.

After Maurice departed, Madeleine threw herself into a chair near the table, and murmured in heartbroken tones, "His everlasting friendship, but not his love! Had he remained a moment longer, I would have betrayed my suspicions." The small portrait of Paul Girard, which Maurice had given her, she still held in her hand. Moving closer to the light which was on the table, she examined it. "This is not the face of my husband, but the disguise?"

Then a sudden thought flashed through her brain, "What if he should be the real accomplice?" She knew that he was capable of most anything, but this thought was too horrible to think of. Remembering her promise, she clasped her hands spasmodically as in fervent supplication.

"Oh! kind Heaven, aid me in the task I have undertaken, to free the innocent, and bring the guilty to justice, guide and direct me, show me the real accomplice."

As if in answer to her prayer, the face of Gonzago was reflected in the large mirror almost directly in front of where she sat. She started, it was like an apparition. She hastily concealed the small portrait in her bosom. "My husband! he must not suspect. I must be calm and to work."

Gonzago had entered the apartment from one of the side arches, and glanced hurriedly about the room, he evidently did not expect to find her alone.

He said in an excited tone, "Madame, I have been seeking you; I wish you to explain this wild rumor, that you are in love with Maurice de La Tour; say it is false."

The thought that his mistress Floretta had dared to enter her home again rose uppermost in her mind, she was in a desperate mood, and ready to acknowledge anything; what did she care if he did know the truth? She answered him very calmly and in a decisive manner:

"Were I to say I did not love him, I would be false to myself."

"You acknowledge it!" he exclaimed incredulously.

"I do not deny it." He turned livid with rage, as he made a dart toward her, "I will kill you!"

"Oh! no you will not," she answered in the same calm manner. "You are too great a

coward, to do anything of that kind, you might be discovered and punished." She was eyeing him cautiously in the mirror to note the effect her words might have upon him. She continued :

"I cannot believe you an actual murderer, you might become, well—an accomplice."

He started violently. "What do you mean?" he exclaimed.

She replied languidly, "Oh! nothing, Monsieur. Only I have made a sacred promise which I would like to fulfill."

"What can she mean?" he muttered to himself aside in a frightened whisper, then turning suddenly to her demanded: "To whom was that promise made?"

"To Maurice de La Tour."

"Maurice de La Tour," he repeated. "Wretch, do you not fear to tell me this?"

"No. Is it because I have become the wife of a man, whose life is a living lie, that I should fear to utter the truth in his royal presence?" As she spoke these words he darted a quick glance about him, as if he feared they might be overheard. She continued, still noting his every move and expression :

"True, I know enough of your past life to make most women recoil, but then you know, I am quite unlike the majority of my sex."

"Take care," he said. "You may go too

far, I demand to know the nature of your promise."

"I will tell you," then with emphasis, looking him straight in the face, "perhaps you can aid me. I have promised Maurice de La Tour to assist him, in every possible manner, in clearing the mystery of the Boulevard Bessières, and proving the innocence of Paul Girard!"

He darted savagely toward her, and hissed into her ear, "I will kill you first!"

Madeleine had gradually become convinced, during this brief interview, that her husband was, without doubt, the accomplice, or one of them. She recalled his annoyance when Maurice had mentioned the affair on the night of the ball. She also recalled the cordial reception he had extended to Floretta, knowing that she, his wife, had forbidden her to enter their home again. Then, adding insult to injury, he threatened her life twice within a few minutes. She felt certain that he would not scruple to carry out that disgraceful suspicion upon her character, and blast the good name of an honorable man, by trying to implicate him in a scandalous liason.

She did not value her own unhappy life, with its sorrow and mystery, but she knew that the man whom she loved was in danger, that with the aid and counsel of the wicked,

unprincipled Spanish woman, he would have little scruples.

When the second threat was made upon her life, she became desperate, and cared not for the consequences, quick to think, quick to act.

She turned upon him with the ferocity of a tigress, her eyes flashing fire. "You are the guilty one, I am convinced; if you again threaten my life, I will denounce you!"

He grabbed her brutally by the wrist with such force that it made her cringe, as he hissed, "You dare not denounce me!"

"Let me go, you hurt me!" at the same time withdrawing herself from him with a desperate effort.

Gonzago's hand flew to his pocket, as if to draw a weapon. She was not a woman to be dared or threatened, she was now thoroughly aroused.

"Dare not!" she cried, and, with a swift cat-like bound, darted to leave the room. She had reached the top step leading to the conservatory. Gonzago had drawn a stiletto, and was about to strike, when a sudden turn on her part brought them face to face; another instant, and the knife of this fiend would have been buried to the hilt in the back of the unhappy woman.

"Coward," she cried, "it well becomes you to strike a defenseless woman in the back."

The soft strains of melody that floated from the ball-room were far from being appropriate for the tragic scene that was being enacted by the host and hostess of these grand surroundings.

The deep vibrating voice of Madeleine was raised, it carried far above the strains of the orchestra into the remotest corner of the ball-room, "Enter all." Like magic, the music ceased, the guests were hurrying in all directions, and soon filled the apartment, each asking a different question, or making some exclamation of surprise, and all in astonishment.

M. Gaston and Partout, still as the Count de Marcerrini, were first to enter. M. Gaston took in the situation at a glance, there had been a serious quarrel.

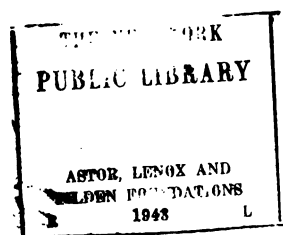
Gonzago stood with the stiletto still clutched in his right hand, a look of abject fear on his handsome dark face. He was not aware that Madeleine had discovered the false title, and his true name, his only thought was of Chopard, and the assistance he had rendered him, he believed his time had come.

M. Gaston was the first to speak and he immediately asked, "My dear Marquise, what is the trouble?"

Madeleine stood proud and erect, her eyes flashing, nostrils dilated, and her beautiful bosom heaving with suppressed excitement,



‘ There stands Gonzago the blackmailer !!!’



There was a ring of tragic fire in her voice as she exclaimed :

“This man has just attempted my life!” There was an exclamation of horror from all sides. M. Gaston was more astonished than he cared to acknowledge, and exclaimed, “Attempted your life, your husband? For what reason?” he demanded.

“Listen,” exclaimed Madeleine, “I will explain. My father, during his travels on the Spanish frontier, met a notorious fellow whom you all know under an assumed name. He came to Paris, my father insisted that I should marry him, for what reason God only knows. I refused to obey him, when he was suddenly called away from Paris, leaving a letter commanding obedience; I married this man without the slightest feeling of love or respect.”

Another exclamation of surprise arose from all, even from Gaston, who had never suspected that the Marquis de Alvarez was other than a Spanish nobleman. He hastened to inquire, “Is not your husband the Marquis de Alvarez?”

“No,” replied Madeleine with great emphasis. “The Marquis de Alvarez died ten years ago, and there stands Gonzago, the black-mailer.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SLANDER, THE VIPER THAT STINGS THE HEART.

THE morning following the reception at the Château de Alvarez, the papers were teeming with the very latest sensation, the Marquis de Alvarez, and his cowardly attempt upon the life of his wife, the recent public favorite Madeleine de Vallerice.

It is needless to say, that he was taken into custody. In anticipation of immediate need, Partout had provided himself with a warrant for the arrest of the Marquis; the charge of attempt to murder was preferred against him.

The glaring headlines in the morning papers, "Sensation in High Life. Attempted Murder of the Celebrated Actress de Vallerice, by her Spanish husband, a bogus Marquis," soon fell under the eyes of Floretta. She was now thoroughly frightened, and realized that her own situation was fraught with great danger.

She perused the papers line by line, to find if any allusions were made to their partnership.

It was a relief to her mind to find nothing of the kind, but on careful consideration, came to the conclusion that she had better absent herself from Paris as soon as possible.

She immediately placed all her bonds, securities, jewelry and notes, in a satchel which she could keep near her. Then she summoned her maid, and ordered the trunks packed. She told her that she might go to her home for a couple of weeks' vacation, as she was going to take a trip into the country.

"Will not Mademoiselle require me to remain and take care of the apartments till your return?" said the astonished girl.

"That will not be necessary, my good girl, you need a change, besides my old nurse Margot will arrive to-morrow, and remain until I return, then I will send for you." She directed the girl to have the trunks sent at once to the Western Railroad Station and to summon a carriage.

She took the maid with her to the station, so that in case she should be questioned, she could truthfully say she had accompanied her mistress, and saw her depart.

Boarding the train, she alighted at Maisons-Lafitte, where she engaged a small room, and, feeling quite safe for a time at least, sat down to carefully view the situation.

She was piqued with herself that she had so

far failed in separating Maurice de La Tour from his affianced wife.

The anonymous letters had no effect upon him whatever, as his visits and attentions toward the pure young girl did not change. The fact that Gonzago was now a prisoner awaiting a charge of murder, did not daunt her, as far as that went, she was now satisfied that it meant a final separation from his wife. By absenting herself for a time from Paris, she would be forgotten, Gonzago would have a speedy trial, and doubtless clear himself, as the public would have only sympathy and compassion for the handsome, passionate young Spaniard who was madly in love with his wife, whom they would surely believe in love with the young lawyer de La Tour. Crimes caused by jealousy always excite curiosity, especially, when the parties implicated are well known, fashionable members of society.

Again she turned her thoughts to the young lawyer and his sweetheart, how could she separate them? Her mind was soon made up, it was a desperate game she was undertaking, but she had no doubt of its final accomplishments.

The following morning, there emerged from this same room, a tall lady of about fifty years of age, sedate, and dignified in demeanor,

and very respectable in appearance. Her hair was silvered, and combed down smoothly on either side of her face, she wore a pair of blue glasses; her dress was very quiet, most unpretentious, and neat.

Before noon of the same day, she entered the apartments on the Rue Suresnes boldly, as Madame Margot, an old nurse.

About two o'clock in the afternoon, she wended her way to the Rue Truffaut, having changed one carriage after another, to ward off suspicion, and finally stopped at the house where Julie Marteau lived with Christine Girard, and her child, little Marie.

She ascended the stairs, and paused before a door leading to a suite of apartments on the second floor. She had carefully assured herself, that this was an hour when she would be sure not to encounter M. de La Tour in his daily visits.

In response to a ring at the bell, the door was opened by Christine. "Is Mademoiselle Marteau at home?" she inquired in an assumed tone of voice. "I am Madame Villas, an old friend, and neighbor of her late uncle, Claude Marteau."

"Do not remain standing, Madame, come in. I will inform Mademoiselle of your presence," replied Christine.

Floretta, Madame Margot, and Madame

Villas, as she now called herself, was ushered into the cosy little parlor. Christine left the room to announce the visitor to her mistress. Floretta expected to see a simple slip of a girl, pretty, and doll-like; she was surprised when Julie Marteau entered. She was not the light-hearted, careless chatterbox we have seen at Ivy Villa, when her dear father was with her. Her terrible grief and bereavement had wrought a great change. From the gay merry girl, she was now the dignified young lady, handsome and refined.

"I am Julie Marteau," she said to the newcomer, in a sweet gentle voice, "whom have I the honor of addressing?" Floretta concluded she had to deal with a woman, not a child, and felt her uneasiness.

"I am Madame Villas, an old friend of your uncle," she repeated. "It has been my desire to see you for a long time, but my health has compelled me to reside in the South." As she spoke, she seated herself in an easy chair and continued, "It was a terrible shock to me, when I heard of your father's death, his brother had often spoken to me of him, and also of you, Mademoiselle. He was devotedly attached to you."

Julie replied with feeling:

"We thought my uncle was devoted to us, until after his death, when his will was read."

She could not have answered more to the purpose of which Floretta wished to lead.

"Ah! Mademoiselle de Vallerice was an unprincipled, crafty woman," she quickly replied.

"Were you acquainted with her?" inquired Julie.

"Oh! certainly not," and she threw up her hands, evidently in horror. "I am not acquainted with people of her class. She is very pretty, though I was surprised that she married so well."

"I have never heard anything detrimental to the character of the lady in question, on the contrary, she is held in high esteem."

"Why I am surprised, Mademoiselle, have you not heard of what is going on? Have you not read the papers?"

"I am not interested in the news of the day, I seldom read the papers," replied the young girl.

Floretta here related the occurrence of the attempted murder of Madeleine, omitting, however, anything alluding to the false title, or anything reflecting upon the Marquis, and taking good care to blacken the character of Madeleine, as only a woman of her type can, when speaking of her own sex. Julie was shocked, but did not reply, except by an occasional exclamation. "Yes," continued Flor-

etta, "my sympathy is with the pure young girl, who no doubt will be the sufferer in the case."

"What girl, I do not understand?" said Julie, showing some interest.

"Well," continued the female fiend, "you see the young lawyer who is so desperately in love with the Marquise de Alvarez, is engaged to be married to a young girl. Poor girl, I don't know who she is, but I pity her when she hears of the perfidy of the man she loves."

It was only natural now, that Julie should be curious, and she asked, "What is the name of the lawyer who has been the cause of this unfortunate scandal?"

"Maurice de La Tour," she answered.

Julie turned pale, and placed her hand over her heart. It was a cruel blow for her, she had trusted Maurice with her whole heart and soul, her very life, her honor was in his keeping, she was dazed for a moment.

Then she cried out, "It is false! it is false! It is a vile slander."

"My dear Mademoiselle, you astonish me, do you know the gentleman?" asked Flor-etta.

"Yes," exclaimed Julie, with much spirit, "and I absolutely insist on your explaining why you dare to connect the name of Mon-

sieur de La Tour so shamefully with that of Marquise de Alvarez?"

"Mademoiselle, I desire that nothing more be said of this, I am sorry I spoke of it, please let the matter rest and allow me to say, *au revoir*," she rose, and started for the door.

"Pardon me, Madame, but I asked an explanation, I insist upon having it." This was said with so much firmness, that even had Floretta desired to end the interview there, it was quite out of the question, as Julie had placed her back against the door, as if to prevent her visitor from leaving the room.

This was all Floretta needed to complete her vile errand. She said, "Since you insist, I suppose I must comply with your demand. It is rumored that Monsieur de La Tour does not visit his affianced wife so often as he did, on account of his mad love for the beautiful Marquise. His liason has been a secret to no one, except the lady's husband, and the young girl whom he is deceiving. It has been carried on ever since he rescued her, one evening, when her horses ran away; she was then Madeleine de Vallerice. There is scarcely a day passes but she may be seen calling at his office. I am extremely sorry that I have been compelled to tell you this, I see that it has completely overwhelmed you. Poor girl." She moved toward the door, "Permit me now to say, *au revoir*."

Julie stepped aside, allowing Madame Villas to open the door, and withdraw without as much as one word. She could not trust her voice to speak, she was indeed overwhelmed, her idol was shattered, her earth star fled !

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE GATHERING CLOUDS.

WHEN Julie Marteau found herself alone, she burst into tears. Hers was the touching despair of the confiding, loving, hopeful young girl, on seeing all her cherished illusions rudely destroyed, her radiant sky had become suddenly overcast with dark and threatening clouds; it was also the despair of jealousy to excess.

It was thus that little Marie found her, and the child's grief was sincere to see her Julie weep; she called her, her Julie, and Julie called the little one sister, for she loved her as such.

Christine Girard and her child loved their young mistress, who had given them both a home, and they had become more as companions.

They loved Maurice also, who had always a kind and cheerful word for them, and had learned to look upon him as their young master, taking the place of dear old Captain Marteau in their hearts.

After the cruel sentence which separated

Paul Girard from his wife and child, they would have found themselves outcasts, but for the goodness of Julie. Her father had learned to love the little child, and she felt it was but proper respect to his memory, to give them a home. She could not hold them responsible for the crimes of another, but in spite of the proofs and the testimony of witnesses, in spite of the verdict of the jury, the sentence of the judges, the daughter of the victim believed in the innocence of Paul Girard.

It was happiness for the poor wounded heart of Christine, and she wept with joy to find that Julie, above all others, did not believe that the father of her child was guilty of such a crime. Little wonder that she loved her young mistress with such devotion.

When she found Julie in tears, she tried to comfort her, and ascertain if possible the cause of her grief. But Julie turned aside, as she cried, "Oh! let me alone, Christine, I cannot tell you."

"Do you forget, Mademoiselle, that it was yourself, who insisted that there should be no reserve between us, two lone women as we are, we mutually promised this; do you not recollect?"

Christine spoke these words with much feeling, and continued in sadness, "And now you have a secret from me, your friend, who

would gladly die to save you! Speak, perhaps I can help you." She put her arm around the waist of the young girl, and looked at her entreatingly.

Julie was deeply moved, she had learned to love this poor suffering martyr, who was almost a mother to her, and whom she now felt as the only being in all the world, to whom she could turn for consolation and advice. Poor girl, she was alone in the world.

She saw that it would be useless to keep silence, that she would be compelled to reveal her trouble sooner or later, and she murmured, "It concerns Maurice."

"What has happened to him, do not fear to tell me!"

Christine was anxious as she asked these questions, she feared something had happened to the young master.

Julie here related in detail, all that the stranger had said, relative to the scandal of the Marquis and Marquise de Alvarez, and that Maurice was the cause. The poor girl again burst into a torrent of tears.

Christine endeavored to calm and console her, she kissed her on the forehead and hair, her astonishment for a time, preventing her to speak. "Do not weep! do not weep! I entreat you, there is some mistake, he cannot love that woman."

"Why should he not?" cried Julie, through her tears. "The Marquise is beautiful, rich, and superior to me in every respect; why should he not love her?"

"Oh! Mademoiselle, she does not compare with you," and the poor woman meant what she said, to her, Julie was an angel. She continued, "Ah! he will come back to you, he will return!"

This last sentence brought Julie to her feet, she wiped away her tears, and with head erect she cried, "He will return to me you say? He will really consent to return to me? You are probably right, he will marry me out of compassion and pity, to perform what he believes to be his duty toward an orphan. He would make me his wife, but no! No! I will never consent to this. I refuse henceforth to accept either his devotion or sacrifice. I will release him, my dream of happiness is ended."

A sob choked her last utterance, grief was about to triumph over pride. Christine, older and more experienced, remained calm, but her thoughts were busy.

"My dear Julie," she exclaimed, "who is this Madame Villas? Where did she come from? Do you know her so well, that you should place any degree of confidence in what she might say?"

Julie in her excitement had been walking to

and fro in the small parlor, she now stopped suddenly. "You are right, Christine, who is that woman? A friend of my uncle, a woman of whom I have never before heard; yet, what motive could she have?"

"Ah! Mademoiselle, we can never know what evil may be plotting against us, to ruin our happiness, and even swear our lives away." There was a tone of bitterness as she added, "I entreat you, do not be hasty, wait, and hear his explanation. Monsieur Maurice may have some secret enemy, who is working to destroy him; you may do him a great injustice."

Julie, loving him so devotedly, was ready to grasp at anything that would seem to prove her lover true to her. She threw her arms around Christine with the impulsiveness of a child.

"You are right, my dear Christine. I will give him the benefit of the doubt, I was wrong to give credence to the idle slander of a stranger. Why should I not go to him at once, speak to him, tell him what I have heard, and give him a chance to defend himself?"

"Monsieur will be here this evening as usual," replied the woman.

Julie looked at the clock on the mantle, then exclaimed impulsively, "Oh! I cannot wait, it is the hour when I will be sure to find him

in his office. I will go to him at once, it would be an eternity to wait till night."

"You cannot go alone."

"I am not afraid of compromising myself. It is a public office, where any lady may safely go on business."

Alas, poor jealous girl, she did not argue the same way a short time later. Having come to a decision she hastily drew on a jacket, put on her hat and veil, and was soon in the street on her way to Maurice's office. On reaching there, she inquired of the clerk if Monsieur de La Tour was within. The clerk responded in the affirmative.

The clerk, who was a young fellow, had not been long in the employ of Maurice, and did not know Mademoiselle Marteau, as she was not in the habit of visiting there.

She was about to turn the knob to enter the private office, when she was prevented by him, "You cannot open the door, Monsieur de La Tour has company."

"Company," responded Julie; "that is no reason why he will not admit me if he knows I am here."

"That depends upon circumstances," he replied with a smile; "perhaps the lady who is in there does not care to be seen."

These words struck Julie very forcibly. They had a peculiar significance for her

unusually excited mind, which was now keenly alive to the least insinuation, or suspicion. Was what she had heard true? Did the Marquise de Alvarez visit him? Was she there at that very moment? How was she to satisfy herself on this point?

With all the calmness at her command, she turned to the clerk and said, "Very well, I will not disturb him now, but will return," and immediately left the room. On finding herself in the hall, she trembled all over, and her heart throbbed wildly at the thought that her rival, yes, her rival, might be at that very moment with him.

She was determined to know, and summing up all her courage, she approached the private office door communicating with the hall, and knocked, timidly at first, then more vigorously. There was no response. After waiting a short while, and fearing she might be molested by some one, she turned away, and descended the stairs to the street.

Instead of proceeding homeward at once, she began to walk back and forth in front of the building, agitated, almost furious, and saying to herself, "It is she! I am sure of it! It is she! It was on her account that he would not open the door, I will see! I will know!"

She waited some minutes. At almost any other hour she might have been interrupted in

her promenade, but darkness was approaching, and the street was quite deserted.

At last she saw a lady come out of the building, in which Maurice had his office and immediately a carriage, which was waiting opposite, drove up to the curbing.

Julie approached close to the lady, and was almost petrified. She had never seen that face but once, but she could never forget it; she recognized without doubt, Madeleine de Valerice, the Marquise de Alvarez.

CHAPTER XXX.

ALONE IN THE WORLD.

THE sensation caused by the arrest of the Marquis de Alvarez, created more than the ordinary nine days' wonder. The papers teemed with accounts of the attempted murder of the beautiful Madeleine de Vallerice. Speculation of all kinds was indulged in; managers called for an interview with the Marquise, in hopes of inducing her return to the stage. Lengthy cablegrams from America, asking her to state her own terms for an extended tour of the United States, were received. The managers and newspaper reporters she refused to see, the cablegrams were left unanswered.

This woman with her proud nature, was completely crushed and humiliated by the fearful discoveries. The mystery of her life she had tried so long to penetrate, was beginning to unravel. She felt convinced that her husband was the true accomplice of the murderer of Captain Marteau, she little knew, or suspected who the actual murderer was.

Goaded to desperation by the insults of her

husband, and at the presence of his mistress again in her home, she denounced him, but not before he had threatened her life many times, and made a cowardly attempt to take it. She was certain that he would sooner or later carry out his threat, and it was better he should be where he could not harm her, or commit more dastardly crimes.

"Self preservation is the first law in nature," but not so in this case. She did not value her own life, but she did not care to die by the hands of her husband; besides she had made a sacred promise to assist the man whom she loved, to prove the innocence of a man now suffering for another's crime, she would help to free that man, if only for the sake of the little child, who had touched the tender chord in her heart, and turned her from her vow of vengeance against an innocent girl.

In a moment of weakness, she had utterly forgotten herself and her pride, when she openly avowed her love to Maurice. She now bitterly repented her indiscretion, and was determined to redeem herself in his estimation.

It was absolutely necessary that she should consult with Maurice, but it was out of the question for him to call again at the Château, so she must go to him, which she did. It was on one of these occasions, on leaving after quite a lengthy interview, in which she had

gained many points, as to the manner of procedure, that Julie Marteau had called at the office of Maurice, and had been refused admittance.

Julie was now convinced that all she had heard was true. She did not do as most girls under the circumstances, rush up the stairs into his office, and upbraid him for his unfaithfulness; she did not faint as some others might have done; her only thought was to fly, to widen the space between her false lover and herself.

As soon as the carriage containing her supposed rival turned the corner, she started for her home. She no longer walked, she ran, she flew. Such was the rapidity of her progress, that she reached the Rue Truffaut in a comparatively short time. She slackened her pace on mounting the stairs, striving to calm her agitation, for she was fully determined to conceal the shameful secret from Christine.

She had scarcely entered the room, when Christine, seeing her red face and excited manner, rushed to her side, exclaiming:

"What is it, Julie dear, what has happened?"

"Nothing! nothing!" she cried, throwing herself into an armchair.

"Is Monsieur de La Tour with you?" inquired Christine trying to lead her to speak.
"I hope he is not ill."

"Ill!" cried Julie with a hard ring of irony in her voice. "Ill? Sick? He?"

Astonished by these words, and above all by the tone in which they were uttered, Christine said, "Why do you speak of Monsieur de La Tour in such a manner? Have you seen him? Surely he cannot be the cause of your being in your present state?"

The resolute and energetic nature which we have attempted to paint in earlier chapters, had been reawakened. Julie suddenly arose as she said, "It is all true, that woman was in his private office, and he refused to respond when I knocked. I watched, to make sure and I am now convinced. I will not see him again," she cried, "for fear of causing me pain, he will deceive me. He must not find me here when he comes to-night. I will go away."

"What," exclaimed Christine, "you will go away? Where?"

"Yes, I will go immediately. I do not know where, it matters little, anywhere."

"Then, if you are determined to go, let us go with you," said the faithful woman.

"No, Christine, you and Marie must remain, I will go alone. Fear not for me. I will take care of myself, but I cannot meet Maurice again. Pack my trunk and portmanteau at once, while I consult a railroad guide."

Christine expostulated, entreating her to

remain, until the young master would come, perhaps he could explain everything. But Julie was determined, so there was nothing left for her to do but obey. She thought of every possible way in which she could send a hurried message to Maurice, but without avail.

Julie had seated herself at a small *escritoire*. "I have not the courage to leave him without a word of farewell," she said. "I wish to release him, and restore him his liberty."

Christine busied herself about the packing while little Marie sat looking on in silent sadness, as Julie wrote the farewell message. After she had finished, she folded, and addressed the letter, at the same moment breaking into tears.

The child approached her, and, putting her little arms about her neck, said, "Won't you take me with you? You won't be so sad if I go, and dear mamma can take care of the house till we come back."

Julie returned the caresses, and replied, "No, little one, you must remain here with mamma, she could not live without you."

Marie seemed to realize the full meaning of her words, and immediately crossed to Christine, and embracing her, said in her sweet gentle voice, "Would you die, mamma dear, if I should go away from you?"

The poor woman clasped her child to her

heart and the tears which she had struggled so hard to keep back now flowed freely, as she exclaimed, "Hush, my darling, what could I do without you? I would not care to live."

Poor, suffering mother, it was well she did not know the sorrow that awaited her.

Julie had sealed the letter, and given instructions that it should be given to Maurice, as soon as he called. She then consulted the railroad time table. Suddenly she said, "A train leaves in less than an hour for Havre, I will take it."

"Oh ! how lonely we shall be without you," sighed Christine. "When will you return?"

"I do not know," Julie replied sorrowfully, as she cast a long, lingering look around the apartment, where she had believed herself truly loved, and where she had loved with all her soul.

Christine asked permission that she and Marie accompany her to the station, but was refused, as it was necessary they remain, in case Monsieur de La Tour should come, in order to give him the letter.

She took an affectionate farewell of the only two creatures, she thought left to her in life, promising to write soon, and to return when she had become sufficiently resigned, to meet her faithless lover face to face.

A cab was summoned, and Julie departed,

reaching the station just in time to check her trunk, and purchase a ticket for Havre.

As the train sped on, a feeling of unutterable loneliness and despair took possession of her. She was going out into the great world, with not a friend to cheer or counsel. What would be the result of this wild and impulsive flight?

CHAPTER XXXI.

STRUGGLE OF LOVE.

MAURICE closed his desk for the day, shortly after the departure of Madeleine from his office, and passed into his living apartments.

His mind was very active on a subject which he failed to quite understand. Christine Girard had been requested by the owner of the building, to inform Mademoiselle Marteau that they must vacate their apartments. Not wishing to cause her young mistress annoyance, she found means to inform Monsieur de La Tour.

Astonished at such proceedings, Maurice went to demand an explanation of the proprietor. The latter at first refused to give his reasons, but finally said, that he had decided to rent his apartments only to married people, that he wanted no more women who lived alone, and who received so many visitors.

Maurice, supposing the man referred to his own, perhaps rather too frequent comings, and goings, thinking it useless to have any difficulty with him, accepted the situation without attaching any further importance to it.

But that was not the only thing that engrossed his thoughts. The anonymous letters sent to him worried him. Not that he gave credence to their contents, but it went to prove that his sweetheart had bitter enemies, who were trying to injure her in his estimation. There was only one way, Julie must consent to a speedy marriage.

He had suffered so terribly from the constraint, and reserve which honor and duty had alike imposed upon him, that he had forced himself for some days to make his visits less frequent. "I can no longer live," he said to himself, "as a friend and brother, near the one I so ardently love, besides she must have a protector, to stop the tongue of slander. I will go to her this very night, I will entreat her,—our nuptials must take place immediately."

Dinner over, he was about to leave his apartment, when a servant approached him with a letter. He glanced at the envelope, and recognized the writing he had seen on other occasions. He opened it, and was not mistaken; it was another one of those mysterious epistles. This one, however, was of a different nature, and caused the handsome face of Maurice to blanch as he read it. "It is absurd! It is impossible! Oh! if I but knew the miserable wretches who dare to trifle with the good name

of my beloved, I would teach them a lesson they would not soon forget." He re-read the letter, which ran as follows :

"MONSIEUR MAURICE DE LA TOUR:—

"You will doubtless be surprised and pained, to learn, that your affianced wife, Mademoiselle Marteau, has within the hour, left the city in company with a young man.

"She evidently could not sacrifice the man she loves for you, for whom she feels only a childish friendship. Whatever message she may have left to the contrary, this you will find to be the exact truth, which she has not the courage to tell you.

"A FRIEND."

He folded the letter, replaced it in the envelope, and put it into his pocket. He then proceeded in all haste to the Rue Truffaut. It was about half past eight when he rang the bell of Julie's apartment, and was answered by Christine. He was troubled by the letter he had just received, and determined that on the following morning, he would place the whole matter in the hands of Monsieur Gaston. He must be cheerful, as Julie, with her refined and sensitive nature, would keenly feel the slightest insinuation. Consequently he greeted Christine in a cheerful way, and started at once for the little parlor, where he met Marie, whom he lifted in his strong arms and kissed. He

could not help but notice the sadness of the child, and caressing her soft hair said, "What is the trouble with my little girl? You have been weeping?"

The child burst into tears, and sobbed as though her little heart would break. Christine, who had followed Maurice into the room, also began to weep. He looked in amazement from mother to child, the blood seemed to freeze in his veins, as Marie said through her sobs, "Julie, my dear sister Julie, has gone away."

He tried to speak gayly as he asked, "Where has she gone? She will soon be back of course, and I can wait for her. You must not cry for that."

Christine now gazed at him in astonishment unable to understand the situation. She thought that some misunderstanding had arisen between the lovers, that Julie in a tiff had started away, and would no doubt return next day. "Do you not know, Monsieur?" she began.

"Know what?" asked Maurice, beginning to fear the answer.

"Mademoiselle Julie has gone on a journey," she answered.

"On a journey, and without informing me? Where can she possibly have gone? You must be mistaken, Christine."

"No, Monsieur," she tremblingly said, as she noticed that Maurice turned deathly pale.

"And when will she return, to-morrow no doubt?"

"No, I think not," she faltered. "She said she would be absent for some time."

Maurice was like one in a dream. He covered his eyes with his hands, as if to shut out every object in order to think. Could the letter he had received be true? No, no, he would not believe it, there was some mistake. Suddenly he inquired, "Did she not even leave some message for me?"

"Oh! yes, Monsieur, forgive me, but in my agitation I forgot." She crossed to the table, took up the letter that was laying there and gave it to him, he tore it open, and read these words.

"DEAR MAURICE:—

"I am about to leave Paris for some time. I discovered to-day that I am marring your life. Take possession of your entire liberty again. Devote your life to her, who has been fortunate enough to win your affection, she who was once Madeleine de Vallerice. It is necessary we must part forever.

"JULIE MARTEAU."

"Great Heavens!" he exclaimed, "she is jealous of Madeleine. Why did I not tell her all? Perhaps she has destroyed herself." He

trembled so, that the letter he had in his hand shook like a leaf, as his thoughts flew to the message he had received a short time before. "Could there be any truth in that?"

He recalled the fact that she was inclined to postpone their nuptials each time he mentioned it, giving as an excuse, that it was too soon after her father's death. "Can it be possible that she is really in love with another? Whom? Where could she have met him? Where had she learned to love him?"

He rose from his seat, and began to walk the room without paying attention to Christine and the child, who sat watching him anxiously. Many strange memories had been awakened. He thought of dear old Captain Marteau, whom he had loved as a father, with what joy he had given his only child into his keeping, on that last night of his life. He thought of the vows of love exchanged, and the bright future they had planned together. True he had not visited her so often of late, but there was a cause for that, and every spare moment of his time was employed on the Girard case, in which he began to feel assurance of success, since he had enlisted the aid of Madeleine, who had entered into the work with great earnestness. He feared to tell Julie, he was wrong, for she had taken this as an excuse for her flight.

He paused in his walk, to interrogate Christine ; after a violent effort he asked abruptly, " Did Mademoiselle Julie go alone, or did some one accompany her ? "

Christine looked at him in amazement, and replied, " Alone, Monsieur, " and finished by relating all that had transpired, from the time Julie had returned from his office, until her departure for the depot.

She did not, however, mention the mysterious lady visitor of the afternoon, whose idle gossip had worked such havoc upon the hearts of the two lovers, nor did she allude, in any way to Julie's visit to his office, which, had she done so, would have changed the situation of affairs in the mind of Maurice. The poor woman did not purposely withhold these facts, they simply did not occur to her, and if they had, she would have believed that he already knew them, and that was doubtless the cause of the rupture between them.

He resumed his walk, muttering some incoherent words, he seemed incapable of reason. The power to think seemed to have deserted him, all his thoughts ran thus, " Julie, Julie, she has deceived me. "

What was to be done ? He could not remain inactive. He bade a hurried good-night to Christine and Marie, and was soon in the street, where he proceeded at a furious pace

without once glancing around. His hurried walk in the fresh air, and the darkness, and silence of the night, had cooled his blood and calmed his excitement. He now began to understand the situation, and realize the terrible misfortune that had befallen him, but he could reason in spite of his grief.

"Julie no longer loves me," he thought, "she loves another, with whom she had fled, and her letter to me is simply an excuse. Oh! my beloved, my betrothed, the wife of my choice, she who was to be my companion through life is dead! dead to me forever! But the child over whom I have promised to watch, the orphan, whose sole protector I am, still lives. Shall I abandon her to herself, allow her to yield herself, body and soul, to some unprincipled scoundrel?"

The affianced husband had nothing to do with the new love, but the honorable man should, and could advise her; protect her against herself, and show her the depths of the abyss into which she was about to plunge.

It was thus he reasoned, but the truth was that he still loved her. One cannot stifle in an instant, the love that has long filled the heart. He endeavored to persuade himself, that he had a duty to perform toward Julie, in order that he might continue to think of, and see her again. In reality it was the lover that was resolving to act.

He paused under a street lamp to look at his watch, it was eleven o'clock. He had walked a long distance but there was nothing to prevent him if he hurried, to catch the twelve o'clock train for Havre, and reach there before Julie had a chance to continue her journey, in case she intended doing so.

"But had she really gone to Havre?" That was the next question to arise in his mind. "Why was it she made no effort to conceal the direction she intended to take? I will make inquiries at the depot."

He immediately retraced his steps, reaching his apartments after a brisk walk. He changed his clothes, hastily packed his valise, and was soon in a carriage speeding to the railway station.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE DAME.

It is conceded by many who have travelled extensively, that Paris is the most beautiful city in Europe. Everything can be seen in Paris. All things to charm the senses, and improve the mind. There is such an *embarras de richesse*, that one often hesitates which way to turn, or what to see first. It is truly the ideal center of a beauty-loving people.

Any one familiar with the habits and customs of Paris, will understand the meaning of "Carnival Week," known also as "Mardi Gras." It is celebrated annually the week preceding Lent, and ends with great rejoicing on Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, which is the beginning of Lent, a season of seven weeks set aside by the church, as a time for fasting and prayer.

This custom is not only observed in France, but also in Italy, Spain, Venice and even in America, for all are familiar with the annual "Mardi Gras" of New Orleans. There is perhaps, no place wherein such freedom is indulged in as in Paris, the gayest city of the world.

During the entire week, crowds may be seen in masquerades of all description, running in all directions, making merry, joking, jesting and playing tricks upon the people.

Paris of to-day, however, from a religious standpoint, is not what it was, the center of a devout faith. Formerly the Carnival was held there simultaneously with those in other Cities, but some years ago, a new departure was indulged in, which has continued annually up to the present year.

Instead of having their great time before Lent, which interfered with those wishing to visit Nice, and other Cities, their celebration takes place after all the others have finished, which brings it into the Lenten season. The great gala-day, which was formerly Shrove Tuesday, is now held twenty days after, and is called, Mid-Lent day.

This day is supposed to end the festivities, but many continue the revelry throughout the remainder of the seven weeks. Indeed, were it not for the devotion of the women, mostly the mothers, and their young families, religion in France would soon be a thing of the past. Would that there were more such mothers and children in that glorious old country, which was once, one of the cradles of our faith.

On Mid-Lent day great privileges are

allowed, especially kissing, if one be dressed in grotesque costume. The principals are Pierrot, and Pierrettes—Harlequins—Colombines—Gendarmes—Monkeys—Savages—Marquis—Marquises—Incroyables, and military costumes of the first Empire.

A grand procession through the principal streets is the feature of this last day of the Carnival. Floats are made representing different corporations, the laundries, and the market women, *des Halles*, fairies in fairyland, châteaux, houses, etc. Then there is the Queen's float, she sitting upon a throne; a woman is selected by vote, by other women to be their queen, the selected one being the most beautiful and graceful. She is surrounded by men and women gorgeously attired, representing her court. Men on horseback surround this float, and flowers are strewn along the pathway. Many well known establishments have their floats elaborately decorated, and some of them filled with merry laughing women.

After the procession disbands, the gay maskers disperse in groups, laughing and singing, throwing confetti at each other. In the evening Paris is beautifully illuminated, the cafés are full of jolly people, theatres, concerts, and balls are crowded, all is life and bustle, contrasting vividly with the quietness and gloom on the banks of the river Seine.

Pont de St. Louis joins one part of Paris, with the Island of the City (*Ile de la Cite*) and the Island of St. Louis, which are the two islands that were formerly the first Paris in the time of the Romans, and the Gauls. This vicinity is generally quiet, and lonesome, compared to the crowds, and gayety, of the grand Boulevards. It is a retired place back of the Cathedral of Notre Dame, and is frequented mostly by fishermen, there being great quantities of fish, owing to the fact that no steamboats ply upon the waters of this branch of the Seine. In this vicinity are also the laundresses, who, on this particular day, join in the procession.

Before continuing with our story, and for the benefit of those who may never visit Paris, it may not be out of place to give a brief description of what is conceded by thousands, to be the greatest cathedral in the world, "Notre Dame."

Before this noble structure one must instinctively bow the head in reverence. Massive in its foundation, it tells us of a faith founded upon a rock. Its walls are venerable, and every stone in its grand construction is saturated with the tears, sighs, and joys of millions of faithful souls that have passed on before; for this great cathedral has lasted since the middle ages. Kneeling in prayer in the mar-

ble edifice, humanity is inspired with sublime aspirations toward a higher, and more glorified existence.

Would that I possessed the divine genius, the angelic inspiration, that my heart, and pen might flow with spiritual power, to accurately describe, in a most exquisite tribute, its true beauty and majesty. It is indeed the temple of the soul's highest aspirations, and stands to-day a living monument to our Mother in Heaven, whose name, the venerable structure immortalizes.

The greatest French writer of fiction—Victor Hugo, said, “The cathedral is the stone bible, a majestic and visible poem, the grand publication of the time. Each stone is a leaf of the mighty volume, each cathedral a different and enlarged edition.”

Great buildings, like great mountains, are the works of centuries; and this is especially true of Notre Dame.

It is of ancient Gothic architecture, and was founded in 1163 on a site of a church of the fourth century, and was consecrated nearly twenty years later.

The choir was not completed until near the close of the thirteenth century, the western portion of the church was not finished until a century later. It has been altered, and restored many times, though not always to its advan-

tage. The Cathedral of Notre Dame stands on the *Cité*, a little island in the Seine, in the very heart of Paris, which is the heart of France.

In front of the Cathedral is a square, known as the *Parvis de Notre Dame* in the centre of which stands an equestrian statue of Charlemagne. North of the square is the new and imposing Hotel Dieu, or hospital, and a little further west, near the end of the island, is the great *Palais de Justice*, *La Conciergerie* and that beautiful gem, Sainte Chapelle.

The Cathedral is not as lofty as might be imagined, and this fact is a disappointment to many viewing it for the first time. This defect is due to two causes, first, that the towers are uncompleted, being destitute of spires, and secondly that the ground has been raised around it, so that its pavements are on a level with the steps. The entire length is 346 feet, and the width at the transept 170 feet. Its most striking feature is the grand west façade. It dates from the beginning of the thirteenth century. The design of the church is peculiar; it is divided by buttresses into three vertical sections,—the central section being flanked by two grand spireless towers 233 feet high. It is also divided horizontally into three stories. The first story contains the three grand recessed portals. Above this runs the *Galerie des Rois*,

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consisting of a row of twenty-eight arches containing statues of French kings. These statues are modern, the originals having been destroyed by the iconoclasts of the revolution.

Above the center of the gallery rises a statue of the Holy Virgin, after whom the church is named, (*Notre Dame*, our Lady,) with two angels, bearing torches, and supported on the right and left by Adam and Eve. The second story contains in the center the great *rosace*, or rose window, forty-two feet in diameter, and a double pointed window of stained glass on each side. The third story consists of an open gallery of double arches on slender columns, about twenty-six feet high and across the top of this runs a balustrade, ornamented with a great variety of grotesque figures. Above the whole rise the two unfinished towers, to the height of fifty-four feet, each pierced with a graceful double pointed window. It is one of the most sublime creations of the architect's art in the world. In the grand center portal is represented the Last Judgment. There is a fine figure of Christ on the central pillar, and sculptured figures of the saved and lost on the right and left sides. The other two portals are dedicated, one to the Virgin, and the other to St. Ann, her mother. The relief in the north portal represents the burial of the Virgin, and is an exquisite work of art.

Entering we find ourselves under a vaulted ceiling 110 feet high, supported by a forest of beautiful slender pillars, there are seventy-five of these supporting columns. It has two aisles on each side of the nave, and these run completely around the choir which is circular. Above the inner aisle runs a triforium borne by 108 small columns, giving an effect of extreme lightness and grace. Most of the windows are of ancient stained glass, unrivaled by modern art. The pulpit is an exquisite piece of wood carving, and was designed by Viollet le Duc. The choir stalls represent scenes from the history of Christ, and His Mother. A row of chapels extend around the church outside the aisles.

One of the most exquisite works of art in the cathedral is the marble group behind the altar; the Descent from the Cross, by Cous-ton; it consists of four figures, the Mother of Christ, the Christ and two angels. There is also a chapel of the Virgin, wherein may be seen a magnificent statue of the Mother of Christ.

The general effect of the interior is solemn and grand. The great organ is one of the finest in France. It has sixty-eight hundred pipes, and ninety-six stops, ten octaves, and one hundred and ten registers, five key boards, and twenty-two pedals with combination.

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From the tower can be seen a beautiful view of the City. The great Bourbon bell, weighing sixteen tons, hangs in the South tower. It is one of the greatest in the world, and has been immortalized by Victor Hugo in his great work, "The Hunchback of Notre Dame." I will not attempt to wander back over the centuries, when before that high altar kings walked barefooted penitents, among them, King St. Louis, bearing the holy crown of thorns, which he secured from the Emperor Constantine.

Within those ancient walls kings were crowned, among whom must be mentioned the two Napoleonic Emperors, and their beautiful queens. Here have resounded the solemn tones of the dead march at royal funerals, here too, the triumphal notes of the Te Deum pealed forth by the mighty organ, in celebration of the glorious victories of France.

I might also recall the time of shame, and horror, when red Republicanism ran rampant, when images of saints were broken by howling mobs, and the sacred temple of the Most High desecrated. But those times, which seem like some horrid nightmare, are numbered with the past, and France, as a grand republic, has learned the great lesson of self-control.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE IRONY OF FATE.

THE grand procession over, the maskers ran wild with delight, making the most of the short time yet remaining, for it was Mid-Lent Day.

It was toward the middle of the afternoon, that a young man, with dark hair which clustered in graceful loose ringlets about his neck and temples, might be seen loitering about the wine shops, in the vicinity of the Pont de St. Louis and Pont des Tournelles.

He was tall and graceful, attired in the costume of a Neapolitan fisherboy, and wore a mask.

At any other time he might have attracted marked attention, for there was something striking in the youth's appearance, but on this particular day there were other things to absorb the mind. They paid no heed to him, notwithstanding the fact, that from early in the day he divided his time between the two bridges above designated. He had just returned from a visit to the wine shop on the quay, and started to cross the Pont des Tour-

nelles, when his attention was attracted by a lone fisherman, who had evidently just arrived from the gayeties of the City, and was busy with his nets in a boat which was moored directly under the bridge.

The man was about fifty years of age, and wore the ordinary garb usually adopted by men of his class, he was rather short, and burly of stature. He stepped out of his boat, and stood gazing in the direction of the *Palais de Justice*. Something like a sigh escaped him, as he turned again to resume his work in the boat.

The young man on the bridge watched the fisherman intently. He lifted the mask from his face revealing his features, which owing to the dark hair and the swarthy complexion were quite impossible to recognize.

Our reader may doubtless wonder who this person was. It was none other than Madeleine de Vallerice. She had been informed by Maurice of his visit to the Conciergerie with M. Gaston, for the purpose of exhorting a confession from Chopard, of the incident relating to Loustaloo, the prisoner who recognized the culprit, but would not divulge his name.

She knew that this was the day on which his term of imprisonment would expire, that he was likely to visit his friend Taupin, whom she

did not know, but by watching for the ex-convict she could trace him.

Being Carnival time, she assumed the disguise already described, knowing that she was too well known in Paris to pass unobserved; the disguise was both picturesque and perfect.

She had watched all day, but the place was unusually deserted. When she saw the fisherman, she surmised he might be one of the men for whom she was in search.

As she stood there on the bridge, her ears caught the sound of music wafted from a distance, not the martial notes which rang through the City during the day, but the soft quivering ghost-like sounds, that sometimes hover about us. "Hark!" and she bent her ear to listen. It was the grand strains of the Stabat Mater, which burst upon the air, and to her, was like a peal from some Heavenly orchestra. The music was from the grand organ of Notre Dame, which was but a short distance away. As the sound waves rolled through the air, never had music seemed to her so grand. She was weary, tired, and the solemn old hymn overwhelmed her soul with a celestial harmony; her heart was heavy with its burden of suffering, and the indignities heaped upon her.

An impulse seized her, "I will go to the old church," she said to herself, "there alone can

solace and consolation be found ! Surely there is room for me there ! " she retraced her steps, crossed the Pont St. Louis, and a few moments later she was before the central portal.

Upon entering, she discovered that the Lenten services were in progress. They are indulged in by the faithful every afternoon during Lent, and consist of the Stations, or Way of the Cross. The venerable white robed priest with black stole, offering prayers before each station, which represent, and remind us of the earthly pilgrimage, and sufferings of our Divine Redeemer ; the altar boys, one bearing a large crucifix, the others carrying lighted candles, the church with its habiliments of woe, the sonorous peals of the organ, that quivered through the lofty edifice vibrating against its rocky walls, impressed Madeleine deeply.

She knelt, and prayed with a fervor she had never felt before. The music of the great organ had softly died away, the church was now nearly deserted ; it was time for her to go. Suddenly she stood almost transfixed. What a sight ! Nothing ever dreamed of could be more beautiful.

It was the rays of the setting sun that rested upon the great rosace, or rose window, which consists of three grand symbolic, and marvelous flowers, striated of red, tender green, and rose, of all the hues of the prism.

When the sun shines through, and gives it life, nothing could be more gorgeous. It is illumined by the warmest shades of coloring, the picture glass of scintillating lights throwing their sparks upon the myriads of figures, which adorn the galleries, and seem to animate them with a mysterious life.

It is a scene which once witnessed, will never be forgotten. It lingered in the heart of Madeleine, it raised her soul, and gave her strength to bear the bitter trials she was yet to undergo.

She rapidly wended her way back to the Pont des Tournelles. The man whom she had left in the boat was gone. The place was deserted, save by a woman who was seated on the foot of the stairs, which led from the bridge to the banks of the river. She was muttering to herself as she drew two small portraits from beneath her coat. A heart-rending moan escaped her lips.

Madeleine was about to speak to her, when she saw the fisherman returning. Not wishing to be seen, she retired a little to a place more secluded, but quite within earshot.

The man entered, and seeing the woman whose back was towards him, he approached, and, unobserved by her, looked over her shoulder. He seemed to recognize the portraits, or one of them, for he was violently

affected. "I beg your pardon, Madame," he said, "but I caught sight of a portrait and thought I recognized it. Whose is it?"

The woman was startled, but soon recovered herself as she replied in a melancholy voice, "They are all I have in life left to me! This is Paul Girard, my husband, do you know him?"

"My God," muttered the man to himself, "this is his wife." Then he resumed in a husky voice, "And the other portrait?"

"Is that of our little child, who has been taken away from me; and now I am utterly alone." She pressed the two portraits to her heart, as she almost wailed the last sentence.

It will be readily understood, that this was the work of the cruel Floretta, who took a fiendish delight in the sufferings of those innocent victims; and yet such people do exist in this beautiful world of ours.

She was determined, that should Mademoiselle Marteau soon return, she would find her little home broken up, abandoned by the one to whom she had entrusted it; that finding herself alone, she might go the way of many poor unfortunates. She did not know Julie Marteau, and could only judge her from her own miserable standpoint, as is usually the case with such women.

She had written an anonymous letter to

the authorities, drawing attention to the fact, that the mother of the child, was the woman who was suspected of having been implicated in the murder of Captain Marteau, still hoping in this manner, to throw aside any suspicion that might have arisen against Gonzago.

It was found that Christine Girard was living alone with the child, and could give no satisfactory explanation as to the whereabouts of Julie Marteau.

When the poor wretched woman discovered that her child was to be taken from her, she acted like an insane woman, protesting her innocence, and imploring not to be separated from her child. The result was that, in spite of her tears and prayers, little Marie was taken to an asylum to await further investigation.

The poor creature was almost stupefied by excessive grief. As soon as she could collect her thoughts, she went to a low dresser upon which stood two portraits, one of her husband, and the other of her child. She pressed them passionately, and wildly to her lips, placed them in the pocket of her coat which she put on, and snatching up her hat started at once for Maurice de La Tour's office, in hope that he could aid her. She soon learned that he had left the city on the same night that her young mistress had gone, she knew not whither.

She returned home to the apartments on the Rue Truffaut, only to find the doors closed against her. Seeking the landlord, she was rudely informed that the apartments would remain closed, until he heard from Mademoiselle Marteau.

This day when all Paris was rejoicing, and making merry, she was separated from her child, and driven from the roof she called home.

She had wandered about aimlessly all day, until she stopped exhausted upon the steps of the Pont des Tournelles.

What wonder that she should wail. Alas poor heart-broken wife, wretched sorrowful mother, what had she to live for now?

Madeleine de Vallerice, standing on the Pont des Tournelles, overheard all the conversation that passed between the heart-broken mother, and the fisherman.

"There must be some deep laid plan to rob Christine Girard of her child." She was about to follow Christine, who had moved away in the direction of one of the other bridges, when her attention was attracted by the approach of a man, considerably under the influence of liquor.

Although he was not in prison garb, it was easy to recognize him, having received a good description of him by Maurice. She withdrew

to the opposite side of the bridge, to allow the newcomer to pass. He only advanced to the end of the bridge, and steadying himself by the railing gazed in the direction of the water, as if seeking for something or some one. Suddenly he yelled out in his drunken tones, "Hello, Taupin, I'm just fresh from a term in the Conciergerie."

At last her long and weary wait was rewarded. "Everything comes to those who wait." At least so it proved in this case, for these were the very two men for whom she waited.

Taupin, for so the fisherman proved to be, was much astonished, as he made but one exclamation, "Loustaloo!"

"Yes, Loustaloo, have you anything to drink down there?" At the same time he descended the stairs with every danger of falling. "You know I must celebrate a little to-day. For a whole year, I've had nothing stronger than water." He made a grimace at the mention of water, and drew from his pocket a flask, from which he took a long draught. "My insides are so empty they won't fill up."

"Well what do you intend to do, now that you are out of prison?" inquired the disgusted Taupin.

"I'm going out fishing with you, you'll let me won't you?"

"Impossible," replied Taupin, "everybody will find out who you are, and——"

He was interrupted by the ex-convict, who said in a snarly way, "They won't do anything of the kind, and if they do, you can say I came highly recommended by the clergy. Besides I don't want to stay here in Paris, where I might get into trouble again, and have to go to the Central, or perhaps to New Caledonia like poor Girard."

"Silence," ejaculated Taupin.

"Oh! I beg your pardon, I thought you had forgotten?"

"I shall never forget," was the dogged reply.

"Then you are a fool," exclaimed Loustaloo.

"Suppose he was innocent of the robbery, he's guilty of the murder."

Tarpin answered quickly, "I don't believe it."

"Neither do I," replied the other, "but as Chopard has dragged him into the affair as his accomplice, he might as well have committed the deed."

Taupin exhibited great eagerness as he asked, "Chopard? You know him?"

"They thought I did. He was in the condemned quarters, I was called to identify him. They thought he had another name, and if I only mentioned his real name, it would have fixed Girard all right."

"And didn't you?"

"Not I. He would have murdered me." The miserable man trembled as he drained the flask.

"How could he harm you, wasn't he condemned to death?"

"Oh! that don't matter," replied the other, "he's too big a scoundrel to get executed, your big scoundrels never do." He chuckled to himself as he continued, "So I pretended not to remember."

Taupin was more than anxious to find out Chopard's real name, he took another bottle from the boat, and as he passed it to his companion he asked, "What was his name?"

"Not much, I never blow, I didn't blow on you, did I? No one but me knows that poor Girard paid that little debt of yours six years ago, when you were starving, he took you in, and fed you, gave you shelter for the night; you broke open the safe, and robbed his master!"

Here Taupin sprang forward, and placing his hand over the mouth of his drunken companion exclaimed, "Hush! for Heaven's sake, man, don't speak of it; I cannot bear to hear it."

Madeleine had been an undisturbed listener; she had now discovered, beyond a doubt, that Paul Girard was innocent of the first crime for

which he suffered. "Good!" she thought. "This is the first strong link in the chain of evidence, with which to establish his innocence."

Loustaloo had finished all that was in the second bottle, he scrambled to his feet, as he muttered, "The bottle's empty, I'm going to the wine shop on the quay."

Taupin tried to restrain him saying, "Not until you have told me Chopard's real name."

Loustaloo mumbled something about knowing how to keep a secret, and after numerous attempts to ascend the stairs, finally reached the top, and started for the wine shop.

"He's too drunk to listen to reason now, he will tell me when he returns," and resumed his work.

No sooner had Taupin entered his boat, than Madeleine emerged from her place of concealment; as she followed in the tracks of Loustaloo, she muttered, "He shall tell me before he returns."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A STARTLING REVELATION.

THE shades of evening were fast closing, when a man was seen wending his way along the banks of the Seine. It was Partout, the chief agent of M. Gaston.

Upon seeing Taupin, he approached him saying, "My good man, do you know a fellow around these quarters called Taupin?"

"Yes, Monsieur," was the reply, "I am the man answering to that name."

"Ah!" exclaimed the little Frenchman, with the air that he was about to distinguish himself. "The very man I am looking for. Have you a friend called Loustaloo? He has been imprisoned for a year, his term expired to-day. He spoke of seeking you immediately, have you seen him?"

"There must be some mistake, Monsieur," he replied with an injured air, "I am an honest man, and do not count among my friends, ex-convicts."

"I wonder what the fellow meant by speaking of you? Perhaps Loustaloo is not his right name after all. I will drop in at the

wine shop at the quay, he may be there celebrating his first day out of prison."

As he started to ascend the stairs, Taupin detained him by saying, "I think, Monsieur, if he is an ex-convict, you will have a better chance of finding him in the wine shop, at the end of the Place Manhert."

"Ah! yes, it will do no harm to call there at once, I should have thought of that before." He tripped lightly down the stairs, and starting in the direction indicated, he said to himself as he glided along, "If I find him before Monsieur de La Tour, and discover Chopard's real name, I will indeed distinguish myself."

He was not aware that Monsieur de La Tour was out of the city, in search of a far different personage than an ex-convict.

As he disappeared from sight, Taupin drew a long breath of relief. "That was a narrow escape! Had he gone up there, he might have discovered all; I must contrive in some way, to get Loustaloo out of Paris."

The man of whom he was thinking, was heard a short distance off, singing, and hooting. "Here he is now, I will try to get Chopard's real name, and perhaps I may in some way atone for the past."

Loustaloo made his appearance on the bridge in a most besotted state of intoxication. He reached the stairs, and with a drunken

yell, fell, and rolled down to the landing on the beach below.

What might have killed, or severely injured a sober man, did not appear to have affected this miserable wretch, for he was about to settle himself to sleep, when Taupin managed to assist him into the boat.

While this was going on, Madeleine was seen to partly cross the bridge; she was in a fearful state of excitement, and clutched the railing, listening intently, as if she feared to lose a word. The mask was from her face now, and although it had grown quite dark, one could see that her eyes nearly started from their sockets, her nostrils were dilated, and her chest heaved heavily from some suppressed emotion.

"I'm awfully tired," growled Loustaloo, "I must go to sleep." Taupin shook him, at the same time saying, "Before you go to sleep, you must tell me Chopard's real name."

"What? Haven't I told you? That's curious," he chuckled in drunken glee. "I thought I told you. Oh! come now, didn't you follow me into the wine shop, and didn't I tell you there?"

"No," replied Taupin, excitedly, "I haven't been in any wine shop."

"Well somebody followed me, I swear it." He again broke into a laugh of imbecility.

"Oh! I've got 'em again, I'll tell you, when I wake up."

Taupin was now thoroughly aroused, and frightened, "Who was it, that this fool had been blabbing to?" He caught his drunken companion roughly by the collar, as he exclaimed, "You shall not sleep, until you tell me Chopard's real name. I will know it!"

"Well the name is Mad—Madeleine." As Madeleine heard her name lisped out in monosyllables, she leaned far over the railing; it seemed as though she would be precipitated into the river, so eager was she to catch each word. "Great Heavens!" she thought, "my name too?"

"Come, come, man, don't try to deceive me. That's a woman's name, and you know it," at the same time shaking the wretch with each word.

"Well isn't his child a woman now? I don't want to fool you, his name is Lar—Laroche. That's what it is, now let me go to sleep." Taupin relaxed his hold on the man and he fell back into the boat, and was soon heard snoring.

"That name, Madeleine Laroche, I have surely seen, or heard somewhere." He had read the name in the papers, but a few months before, on the occasion of Madeleine's marriage with the Marquis de Alvarez. For the

first time the public had heard that the beautiful de Vallerice, had only assumed that name for professional purposes, but she was married under her lawful name. The name of Laroche had never been mentioned before or since ; it was no wonder that Taupin did not recall it on the moment. "I will make inquiry," he said to himself, "I must now endeavor to give that chap of a detective a wrong clue, and return here as quickly as possible before that drunken fool wakes up ; then to get him out of Paris at once." He started in the direction taken by Partout.

It was fortunate for Madeleine, that the place was so deserted, for no sooner had the drunken ex-convict mentioned her name, than her hands relaxed from the railing, and she fell overcome upon the bridge. She lay motionless for some time. It had grown very dark now, and the lights of the City could be seen in the distance ; suddenly a single light shown from the front of Notre Dame.

Madeleine moaned, and struggled to her knees, "Oh ! Heaven !" she exclaimed aloud, in her fearful anguish. "Why was I not spared this last terrible disclosure ? Gonzago, my husband, is the accomplice, and Chopard, the murderer, is my father." She covered her face with her hands, as if to shut out the terrible picture of the murdered Captain, in his

once happy home ; the innocent young girl Julie Marteau in her anguish rose before her. Was it possible that she had once vowed vengeance upon the daughter of her own father's victim ? Everything seemed to magnify in her sight, she rose wildly to her feet exclaiming, " Oh ! it is horrible ! Horrible ! " She stood leaning over the railing, gazing into the dark river. The moon had suddenly emerged from behind a cloud, and now cast its clear rays upon the waters, causing the rippling silver waves to dance along in merry glee, singing softly as they communed with each other in their course. Madeleine stood fascinated with the sight, from out that scintillating, shimmering water, the voice of the tempter reached her, and she cried out :

" Oh ! it is more than I can bear. One plunge into these shining waves, that seem to beckon me, and all will be over." Before the words had scarcely escaped her lips, there rang out upon the stillness of the night, the grand vibrating tone of the great bell of Notre Dame.

Madeleine started, and looked in the direction of the church, it seemed like a summons from the brink of the grave ! As she gazed, the light shot out from every window of the great church, it was time to commence the evening service. She recalled the beautiful scene of a few hours earlier, in the rays of the

setting sun. A calm resignation took possession of her soul ; she forgot her own sufferings, and thought only of the good she could do.

When the great bell had ceased ringing, the soft tones of the organ reached her, she raised her eyes and hands to Heaven. "Father! Forgive my weakness. Thou hast shown me my duty. I must not forget my promise to Maurice, which I will keep, or perish." She was soon hurrying in the direction of M. Gaston's office, which was but a short distance away. In her haste, she passed a woman whom she did not recognize, it was Christine Girard. The poor creature had wandered about hungry all day, and was now making her way toward the bridge, from whence Madeleine had just come. On reaching it, she stood looking into the waters below. "It is not the river which lies there," she said to herself, "but an open grave, ready to receive me." Peering opposite, she could see the lights from the small huts, occupied by the fishermen, and laundresses. The thought suddenly occurred to her, that, should she leap from the bridge, the splash into the water might attract attention. She was not to be frustrated in her attempt.

There were many floats, or rafts on this portion of the Seine, used by the fishermen. Christine descended the stairs, and walked out

on one of these. The look of despair on her white face was pitiable to behold. She sat down upon the float, and remained there silent for some time. Finally she muttered to herself, "The more I look upon the water, the more it seems to welcome me to its cold embrace! Only a leap, and I shall be at rest; I have suffered enough. Why have they left me, his broken-hearted wife to starve, and our child to suffer."

She drew from beneath her coat the two portraits of her loved ones, and pressed them fervently to her lips, replacing them again in her pocket. She raised her sorrowful eyes to Heaven, as she moaned, "Oh! God, why do they punish even innocent little children? I can endure my misery no longer." She rose to her knees at the very edge of the float, and, with a heart-rending sob exclaimed, "Oh! my child! My husband! God pity, and forgive." With this prayer upon her lips, her arms outstretched to Heaven in supplication, she sank beneath the waters.

The float from which she dropped was but a few feet from the water, but the splash was loud enough to attract the notice of Loustaloo, who had just awakened in the boat. In an instant he realized that some one had fallen into the water, but was helpless to render assistance. He immediately set up a yell, "Somebody has fallen overboard, help!"

Taupin, who was hurrying back, heard him, and arrived just in time to see Christine rise for the first time, upheld by her skirts, which seemed to form a balloon. He was horrified as he saw the woman, and recognized her in the moonlight. "Great Heaven, it is Christine Girard," he exclaimed, "and the current is too swift to save her."

These words reached the ears of Madeleine, who had just returned on the bridge, accompanied by two officers. Quick as a flash, and before any one could realize her intention, she pulled off her jacket and hat, and tossing them aside, sprang lightly to the balustrade; her hands shot up, her head bobbed down, and her lithe body cut through the moonlight, as clearly and precisely as though she had plunged at her leisure from a diver's board. She was soon swimming toward the helpless form of the unfortunate Christine, who had risen for the third time. A few minutes later she had reached and captured the drowning woman, amid cheers from the crowds that had now gathered.

Taupin and a boatman had already pushed off in a skiff. The would-be suicide, and her gallant young rescuer were soon ashore.

It was fortunate for Madeleine that it was night, which helped her in a great measure to conceal her identity. She soon managed to



" Her little body cut through the moonlight."

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cut loose from the crowd that pressed about her, leaving Christine stretched upon the platform of the float, surrounded by the women.

The poor convict's wife gave no sign of life ; her eyes were closed, her jaws were tightly locked, and her face was overspread by a ghastly pallor.

CHAPTER XXXV.

SACRIFICE OF LOVE FOR DUTY.

MADELEINE managed to gain the Château de Alvarez without attracting any attention. She was completely fatigued, and exhausted from her experience of both day, and night. Her mental anguish was indescribable. The horrible discoveries she had made seemed to haunt her like some grim spectre crying out for vengeance.

She was soon in the hands of her faithful Suzanne, and sleeping soundly by the aid of a narcotic administered for the purpose.

The following morning she awoke early and tried to view the whole situation. She thought of Christine Girard, whose life she had tried to save at the risk of her own, for not one man among the crowd had courage to brave the strong current.

Did Christine revive, or was she dead? This was the subject for immediate action. In less than an hour Suzanne had been given full instructions, and had already arrived in the vicinity of the Pont des Tournelles. On

alighting from the carriage, she encountered a policeman on duty, from whom she ascertained the information she desired.

The policeman had taken official report, which it was his duty to make immediately to the nearest commissioner of police, in case of any public attempts at suicide.

Suzanne asked to be directed to the woman, Christine Girard, stating at the same time that she wished to take the poor woman under her protection.

"Unless you will be responsible for her," replied the officer, "I will be obliged to take measures to prevent any new attempt she might make at self destruction."

"I will be responsible for her," replied the girl, as she handed him a card. The officer glanced at the card, and read the address of the Château de Alvarez. Suzanne continued by way of an explanation, "I am employed there as maid, and Christine Girard is my friend." He seemed satisfied with the candor of the girl, and pointed out the boat, where she would find Christine.

Suzanne lost no time in descending the bank, and reaching the boat.

All those who ply their trade along the banks of the Seine, know what must be done to resuscitate persons who have become asphyxiated by drowning. Thanks to the intel-

ligent care of the laundresses, Christine was revived after considerable trouble.

It was not necessary to have the woman she sought pointed out to her, for Christine sat aside pale, and depressed. The girl approached her, and in very few words informed her that she had found new friends, who would do everything they could for her. "Come with me at once, and in a short time you will be in a good home."

The poor woman was completely stunned by the fearful emotions of the previous day; she tried to recall all that had passed, but her recollections were confused; they fled from her as she tried to seize them, as the dreams of the night flee from us on awakening.

The only thing she could remember, was the separation from her child, her heart hungered for her little one, she could not live without her.

Suzanne thanked the good women who flocked about her, and giving them a pocket-book, the contents of which was to be divided among them, she hurried with the bewildered Christine, and after a brisk ride drew up before the Château de Alvarez.

It is needless to say, that Madeleine was anxiously awaiting the return of the maid, either with Christine or the sad news that her efforts of the previous night had been fruitless.

Christine was lead without delay to the apartment of Madeleine, who, upon seeing her, cast aside her usual self control, and, throwing her arms around the poor bereaved creature, wept as if her heart would break.

We will not attempt to describe the astonishment of Christine, when she found herself conducted into the presence of the Marquise de Alvarez, or the impulsive greeting she received. She could not understand it, but she seemed at once to gain strength, and hope, as she stroked the shining hair of Madeleine, and tried to comfort her. She could never explain it, but her mother's heart went out to the beautiful sufferer, and for the moment she forgot her own terrible grief.

"Oh! thank God, thank God!" exclaimed Madeleine after the first outburst, "you are saved! Saved! You have been spared, that I may see you happy."

Christine was made as comfortable as possible. Madeleine, having gained her complete confidence, soon learned the reason of all her recent troubles. She told of their happy little home on Rue Truffaut, of the visit of Madame Villas, of Julie's visit to M. de La Tour's office, and her determination to go away. She also told of the terrible agitation of Maurice, and his absence from the City, of her child being taken away, and all doors closed

upon her. She was crazed with grief, and sought a watery grave.

Madeleine listened attentively, and formed her plans and conclusions quickly. The time has come when she must work, work to repair all the wrong that had been done, "But how? First to place Floretta where she could do no more harm." To think was to act. Seating herself before an *escritoire*, she wrote a long letter to M. Gaston. She gave the number of the apartment where Floretta lived, and advising them that if they wanted her on charges of blackmail, she could be found masquerading in a certain disguise, which she described. She also touched on the subject of Paul Girard's innocence. She signed it anonymously and sent Suzanne to post it with instructions to bring the morning papers.

The girl soon returned, Madeleine opened the papers to find one whole page devoted to the arrest of one Taupin, for the crime for which Paul Girard had served his first sentence. The ex-convict, Loustaloo, was held as a witness. It also told of the attempted suicide of Christine Girard, and the gallant rescue by a fisher lad, who had suddenly disappeared.

Madeleine read the account aloud, and it was only when she had ceased, that Christine, dazed with the joyous news, fell to her knees,

and sobbed out her thanksgiving, reiterating that her poor husband was as innocent of the second crime for which he was then suffering, as he was of the first.

It was now Madeleine's turn to comfort the poor creature, and assure her that everything possible would be done, to bring about his complete vindication.

Her thoughts now turned to Maurice, and Julie Marteau. She remembered the last day she had called at his office, that on entering her carriage, a young girl had stared wildly into her face. She did not recognize her then, her mind was intent upon the work she had undertaken. But now she recalled the incident. It was possible that Maurice had not told Mademoiselle Marteau of her visits to his office, and having heard the gossip of the villainous Floretta, the young girl was madly jealous, and fled. Maurice had gone to seek her.

She had thrown herself upon her knees beside a couch, her head sinking deep into the soft silken cushions. She wanted to think, she must shut out from view all but her own sad thoughts. "Oh! Mother in Heaven," she wailed in silent anguish. "Show me my duty. Give me strength of mind and body to do Thy will. Be Thou my guide and directress." Gradually her mind revolved itself into a fixed purpose, and she said to herself, "I must lock

forever in my heart of hearts, my first, my only love. The image of Maurice shall be sacredly enshrined, even in Eternity! Help me to free the innocent, to give him back to his suffering wife and child, and to render justice to the young girl whom bitter fate has made an orphan. She must be re-united to her affianced husband, and it is I, who must bring them together."

She raised her right hand, and her lips fervently pressed something that was clasped therein, at the same time raising her beautiful eyes to Heaven, with a look of almost sublime resignation, she had registered a vow.

Then gazing soulfully on the object in her hand, two great tears trickled down her cheeks, as she murmured, "Oh! It is hard to bear! It is very hard to bear."

It was a small miniature of her mother in a gold frame, surrounded with gems, and suspended by a long thin gold chain, which she wore about her neck. It was the only article that her unfortunate father had saved from his once happy life. Any one would find it hard to believe that it was not the face of Madeleine. The only difference being in the manner in which the hair was dressed, but even the color was identical. No wonder that Chopard idolized the child who was the counterpart of the wife he worshipped.

Madeleine seemed oblivious of the fact, that Christine and Suzanne were silent witnesses to her every action. They saw that some terrible struggle was taking place in the thoughts of the woman before them. They could not understand it all, and they retained a respectful silence, but all the time Christine's poor heart was yearning for the child, who had never before been separated from her. Oh! If she could only see her child, to tell her the good news of her poor wronged father.

Suddenly Madeleine's eyes rested upon the sorrowful countenance. She started up saying, "Oh! How selfish I am! Forgive me, my good Christine, I know you are thinking of your little Marie."

She told Suzanne to order the carriage at once. In due time the Marquise de Alvarez, accompanied by Christine, alighted, and passed through the heavy iron gates of the orphan asylum where little Marie Girard had been brought the day before.

Madeleine had already secured the proper credentials to visit the place, and demand the child, who had been unlawfully taken from her mother.

The joyous meeting of mother and child can be best imagined by the reader. The cruel separation told so greatly on the child, even in so short a time, that had it continued

it would have been safe to predict a very short life for her.

The first great joy of meeting her mother being over, she turned to the stranger, and recognizing Madeleine, sprang to her, throwing her little arms impulsively about her neck, saying, "Oh! Mamma dear, you have brought the beautiful lady." Madeleine was astonished at being recognized by the child, who had seen her but once, and exclaimed:

"Why, my little Marie, is it possible that you remember me?"

"Oh! yes," replied the child, "I can never forget how beautiful you looked and how you said 'you hoped my dear papa was innocent, for my sake.' I dreamt of you lots of times, and I always pray for you."

On the long lashes of Madeleine the great tears glistened. She bowed her head and let them fall. There was something in this sweet child, that touched the inmost chords of her heart.

Months before when she had vowed vengeance upon Julie Marteau, whom she thought she hated, whom she accused of coming between her, and the man she loved, the sweet voice, and pure kiss of this innocent child, had turned her wrath, and changed the whole current of her life.

Madeleine had never forgotten the child,

and she now renewed her determination to set Paul Girard free, if only for the sake of his child.

Shortly after she re-entered the carriage with Christine, and Marie, and was driven to the Rue Truffaut.

She sought the proprietor, and after a short interview was given the keys of the apartment on the second floor where Christine and her child were soon re-installed in the little home.

Madeleine was preparing to return to her home with a promise to see them soon again, when a letter arrived for Christine Girard. Oh ! Joy ! she tore it open, having recognized the handwriting, it was from Julie Marteau.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE TWO DAUGHTERS.

WE left our young friend Julie Marteau, on her way to Havre. She took a seat beside an elderly lady, and was soon wrapped in deep thought. She suddenly discovered, however, that she had attracted the attention of the lady beside her. She glanced about her in hopes of seeing an unoccupied seat, when the lady accosted her:

“Pardon, Mademoiselle, but you remind me of a young friend I had in Paris. If I mistake not, you are Mademoiselle Julie Marteau?”

Julie looked in surprise, and recognized at once Madame Berson, an old neighbor, whom she had known when she lived in Paris with her father, before they had moved to the Boulevard Bessières, after the death of her uncle Claude Marteau.

Julie, under any other circumstances, would certainly have recognized her old friend at a glance, but she was engrossed with the burden of her sad thoughts, fleeing as she was from the only beings that she loved. Life seemed

all gloom, she could see no brightness in the future.

Had she met Madame Berson the day previous, she would have been delighted, for the old lady had taken a warm interest in the motherless girl, when the old Captain had brought her from the convent, to the happy little home he had prepared for her.

There is no doubt that had the young girl recognized her first, she would have avoided her. It was fortunate for her, however, that she did not. The old lady succeeded in gaining the confidence of Julie, the result being that when Havre was reached, they both entered a carriage, and were driven to the house of Madame Berson, in the suburbs of the City.

The following morning Julie hastened to write to Christine, but not receiving a reply wrote a second time. It is quite needless to add that the letter had been intercepted by Floretta, and never reached Christine. At the expiration of a week, Julie wrote again.

She was much distressed at not hearing from Christine, and the child, and determined to send a messenger, to personally investigate, did not a reply arrive very soon. It happened by chance that the last letter reached the apartment on the Rue Truffaut just as Madeleine was leaving, otherwise it would have met the fate of its predecessors. It was great joy

to the two women, and to little Marie, to receive news from Julie, by it they were informed of her whereabouts.

Madeleine soon decided on a course of action. The following afternoon Julie was surprised by the maid announcing, that a lady wished to see Mademoiselle Marteau.

Who could it be? Likely Christine had come, she could think of no other.

She was astonished on entering the parlor, to find herself face to face with the Marquise de Alvarez. Madeleine saw at once the girl's embarrassment, and was the first to speak. She rose, and approaching Julie, said, "You are somewhat surprised to see me, Mademoiselle, but if you will be good enough to be seated, I will soon explain my unannounced presence here."

Julie seemed utterly bereft of speech. She moved mechanically to the sofa, where she seated herself, turning her large blue eyes to Madeleine inquiringly.

"You will pardon me, but I come to tell you that yourself, and Monsieur de La Tour, are the victims of some terrible plot."

Julie by this time had become quite composed. At the mention of her lover's name she flushed, and replied with quiet dignity:

"You cannot deny the fact, Madame, that you are a frequent visitor at the office of

Monsieur de La Tour, which has given rise to scandal."

"Yes," responded Madeleine, without the least hesitation. "He received me in his office, because I associated myself with him in a work in which he is engaged."

Julie drew herself up more in a jealous pout, than real dignity, "I fail to understand what business Monsieur de La Tour could have with you, that he should wish to keep from his affianced wife."

"You foolish child," replied Madeleine, who did not fail to notice the jealousy of the girl. "There are many things in business, which a man cannot tell even to his wife." Then she added in a more serious voice, "Monsieur de La Tour has good reasons in keeping this secret from you, above all others. It pains me to be obliged to tell you, but an explanation is necessary. The work in which we are associated is the discovery of the assassin of your father, and the release of Paul Girard, an innocent man."

She produced a copy of the paper containing an account of the arrest of Taupin, and Loustaloo, and also the attempted suicide of Christine Girard.

Julie listened while Madeleine read the long article aloud to her.

She could scarcely realize that she heard

aright, it seemed like a dream, in fact the poor girl had not been herself since she had received the cruel shock, perpetrated by the vindictive Spanish woman. It took but a few minutes to briefly explain all that had transpired, since her hasty departure.

The joy she felt at the prospect of proving Paul Girard's innocence was overbalanced by remorse, as she cried :

"Poor Christine, how she has suffered, and it is I who have been the cause ; had I remained, she would have been spared it all. And little Marie !" she added. "The child I have learned to love as a dear sister." She did not weep, she stared with a wild expression foreboding no good.

Madeleine tried to comfort the girl, but she only turned on her, with what seemed for a moment like a fearful hatred, which Julie really felt. She was but human, and for the instant it flashed through her mind, that the beautiful stately creature beside her was her rival.

Madeleine read her thoughts, and said very gently :

"Forgive me, Mademoiselle, if I have wounded or caused you pain. I know appearances are against me. Oh ! could you look into my heart, and read its anguish, its life sorrows, you would pity me !"

Her deep melodious voice trembled with suppressed emotion, as she continued, "I come to you as woman to woman, and I am sure that you, with your true noble nature, will believe me when I tell you, that I had no intentions of causing you pain, on the contrary, I was but trying to discover the real assassin of your dear father."

Julie suddenly caught the hand of Madeleine that was placed upon her own, and replied, with intensity, "Ah! It was that? Only that?"

Madeleine smiled sadly, "Only that," she repeated.

"But—but," Julie murmured lowering her eyes, "does not Maurice love you?" She awaited the answer in breathless suspense.

"Oh! how could you wrong him?" Madeleine exclaimed bitterly; "he loves only you."

The tone carried conviction with it. Julie, like a vanquished, penitent child, threw herself into the arms of the woman beside her, sobbing like a child. Madeleine did not attempt to check her tears. She was glad to see them flow, knowing that it was the only way to gradually relieve the nervous excitement, in which the poor girl had lived for more than a week. As she grew more calm, Madeleine stroked the glossy dark brown hair and said :

"You have no cause to reproach Maurice, I repeat that he has never loved any one but you. He loves you with his whole heart and soul. You must go back with me, to the little home you have deserted, to the loved ones who are waiting for you. Give your hand freely to the man who has your heart, and let the wretched sorrows of both your lives be blotted out forever."

Only her God knew the struggle it cost her to give up the man she so fervently loved. It was an unkind fate, and the crimes of her father, that had locked that love in her heart forever.

She was not a woman to throw herself away because errors had been committed; she was one to occupy herself with active womanly duties, in making the lives of others happy.

She inherited the indomitable will of her father to carry out whatever undertaken, but nature had fortunately endowed her with more of good than evil.

"Oh! how deeply I have wronged you, when in reality you have been my friend; how can you ever forgive me?"

"By returning with me at once to Paris, Maurice may have returned, and will be anxious about you." She rose consulting her watch, and continued, "A train will leave in forty-five minutes, if you hurry we can catch it."

Madame Berson was soon informed upon the whole subject, and delighted at the happy turn of affairs. She was very much impressed with the Marquise de Alvarez, and expressed the hope, that the acquaintance which began under such circumstances, would continue in future friendship.

The old lady faithfully promised to visit Julie in a few days. After affectionate *adieux*, Julie Marteau, the daughter of Captain Marteau the victim, was speeding back to Paris, under the protection and guidance of Madeleine Laroche, the daughter of Chopard, the assassin.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A HEART BOWED DOWN.

MAURICE DE LA TOUR thought it best to make sure that Julie had gone to Havre, before starting in pursuit of her ; consequently upon reaching the Western Railroad Station, he approached one of the guards, who stand near the ticket office, for the purpose of assisting passengers in the purchase of their tickets, and inquired if he had been on duty at the departure of the six forty-five Havre Express ?

Receiving an affirmative answer, he gave the description of Julie, asking the man if he could remember such a young lady.

"Yes," he replied, "I can remember very well, as there were but few passengers for that train. There were two young ladies that might answer to your description, one was alone, the other was accompanied by a young man."

Maurice felt his heart leap suddenly, and having ascertained the full description of the young man, he thanked the employee, purchased a ticket for Havre, and was soon on his journey.

He reached Havre at half past five on the

following morning. On close inquiry, he found that two young girls had arrived on the preceding train from Paris, one accompanied by a young man, the other by an old lady.

There was not the least doubt existing in the mind of Maurice, Julie had met the man with whom she was fleeing, he must find them; it never occurred to him that she might have met an old lady.

He visited all the hotels, and finally discovered that they had departed for Southampton. He lost no time, but set out as early as he could, only to find, after pursuing one clue after another, that the couple had gone to London.

It was an insane idea to think of ever finding them in that great City, but he journeyed on, and finally, at the expiration of three weeks, returned to Paris disheartened, but fully resolved to take M. Gaston into his confidence, in order that he might set his agents on the track.

He paused in his thoughts, "What right had he now? Julie was independent. If she loved another better than himself, that was his misfortune, he had no legal right to interfere, he was not even a distant relative." The thought nearly maddened him.

He took Julie's farewell note from his pocket, and read it over for the hundredth time, he

knew it by heart. He replaced it again in his pocket, took his hat, and was about to go and visit the little home on the Rue Truffaut, in hopes that Christine had received some tidings from her young mistress, when a servant appeared with a note.

He trembled visibly as he took it, "Could it be from her?" At a glance he saw he was mistaken. He tore it open, it was from Madeleine, and read as follows—"When you return, call upon me immediately, I am anxiously awaiting you. MADELEINE."

Concluding that Madeleine might have important news to communicate, he determined to go to the Château de Alvarez at once, and on his return call upon Christine.

"After all this weary search, only to return without my beloved. Oh! the suspense is killing me." One could easily perceive that he had passed many sleepless nights, which told upon him.

At this point, a knock was heard, and M. Gaston entered. "Ah! Good evening, Monsieur Gaston, I'm glad to see you." He held out his hand to the visitor, it was indeed a change to see an old familiar face.

"Good evening, Monsieur de La Tour. I called several times; you have been away I understand?"

Maurice pointed to a chair, and when they

were seated, Maurice replied, "Yes, I was called away suddenly on business, and have just returned. Is there anything new?"

"Well, yes," replied Gaston. "On Mid-Lent night, a young fisherman called at my office. He said that while walking on the Pont des Tournelles, he overheard a conversation between two men, the details of which he related. A couple of officers were sent at once to place them under arrest. One proved to be, by his own confession, Taupin, who committed the robbery for which Paul Girard was condemned some years ago. The other was the ex-convict Loustaloo, whom we detained as a witness." Maurice was delighted at this piece of good news, and impulsively remarked:

"Ah! Monsieur, I felt sure Paul Girard was not a criminal. It was chiefly on account of that conviction, that he was condemned as the accomplice of Chopard."

"The mystery seems to deepen," continued Gaston, and in a brief space of time he had told Maurice all that had occurred, relative to Christine's attempted suicide, and the gallant rescue by the young fisherman, whom, he added, "seems to have dropped out of existence."

"That is strange," mused Maurice, "did no one seem to know him?"

"No one. On the following morning I re-

ceived an anonymous letter, setting forth that Paul Girard was as innocent of the second crime for which he received a life sentence, as he was of the first. Through that letter we were put on the track of Floretta Castro, the notorious partner of the bogus Marquis de Alvarez. She had succeeded in evading us, but thanks to the description of the disguise given us, we have her safely in custody."

"Has this Gonzago had his trial yet?" inquired Maurice.

"No, but it is set for Wednesday next, if he can be caught, for it was discovered this morning, that some time during the night he made his escape."

Maurice started at once, his thoughts flew to the safety of Madeleine, whom he had really learned to look upon as a friend. Before he could reply more than an ejaculation, Gaston continued:

"We have some of the best men on the force out, and it is only a matter of a few hours, when he will be recaptured."

"I sincerely hope so, Monsieur," exclaimed Maurice. "But have you been able to discover who sent the letter to which you referred?"

Maurice it will be remembered had just finished reading Madeleine's note, when Gaston made his appearance, and he still held it in

his hand. Gaston during the conversation had scrutinized the letter, and in reply to the question of Maurice, said very abruptly, "No! Have you any objections to me looking at that letter?"

"None whatever," replied Maurice in surprise. "It is from Madeleine de Vallerice." He passed the letter to Gaston, as he continued, "You recollect she promised to assist me in the Girard case?"

Gaston looked at the writing, and exclaimed, "Good, I have it, the same hand that wrote this, wrote the anonymous letter. That woman knows more of this affair than she dare tell, I have always been suspicious of her. Now I am convinced, that Madeleine de Vallerice wrote that letter, to gain time to perfect some other diabolical plan." At the same time he rose to his feet, lifting his hat from the table where he had placed it.

Maurice rose at the same time exclaiming, with much spirit, "Excuse me, Monsieur Gaston, I feel convinced that you are wrong in your accusations against Madeleine de Vallerice. I have found her to be a woman of pure sentiment, of strong and noble principle; you do her an injustice, Monsieur."

He spoke with such warmth, that Gaston looked surprised, "If you have no objections I will retain this letter, and compare it with the one I have in my office?"

“Certainly, Monsieur, certainly.” At the same time accompanying Gaston to the door. The two men parted, not knowing how soon, and under what circumstances they were to meet again.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

TWIXT LOVE AND DUTY.

MAURICE DE LA TOUR hailed a carriage, and in a short time arrived at the Château de Alvarez, where he was ushered into the library. He did not have to wait, for Madeleine soon joined him.

She was attired in a simple black dress, but the very absence of ornaments, made the superb contour of her figure more noticeable, and the lustre of her hair more brilliant. There was a marked change in her, caused by the intense mental strain of the past few weeks, together with the knowledge, that she was the daughter of an assassin.

Maurice could not fail to notice that her face was paler than formerly, that her eyes were sunken, her expression more subdued; her lips had lost the vivid red coloring, but these changes only gave more character to her beauty.

She advanced with the same quiet queenly bearing which was part of her, and taking the hand he offered said, " You are here at last, I almost despaired of seeing you again."

"How did you hear of my return?" he said leading her to a seat.

"I took the best possible means to learn it, I called every evening at the same hour."

"Do you not fear to arouse unpleasant suspicions?"

"Oh! it matters little to me now. Where have you been?" she asked suddenly.

"I was called away on business," he replied not caring to discuss the subject of Julie's supposed desertion of him.

"Have you forgotten Paul Girard?" she asked.

Maurice related what Monsieur Gaston had told him, taking care not to mention the escape of her husband from prison, and adding, "Have you discovered any new clue that may lead to the murderer?"

"I have discovered both the murderer, and the accomplice," she exclaimed. Seeing his astonishment, and that he was about to question her, she continued in a tone of anguish, "For Heaven's sake ask me no more, a terrible responsibility seals my lips, and denies me the right to speak."

"You must have some great motive in wishing to conceal what you evidently know; will you not confide in me?"

"Maurice, I will, but I have not the courage to tell you." She rose, crossed the room, at

the same time taking from her bosom a key, with which she opened a desk beside which she stopped, and drew forth a package of papers.

She returned to Maurice, and giving them to him she said in a calm deliberate tone, "Here are the necessary proofs of everything, with a history of my whole life ; keep them, they also contain proofs of Paul Girard's innocence."

Maurice took the papers in astonishment, exclaiming, "Proofs of his innocence !"

"Yes, undeniable proofs." She reseated herself beside him, and with intensity said, "Maurice, forget my former confession of love. See only in me the faithful friend, who associated herself with you in a good work ; there is a gulf between us now, which can never be bridged over."

"To what do you allude ?" he asked hastily, placing the papers in his pocket.

There was a tone of unutterable sadness in her voice, as she replied, "To sorrows I cannot reveal even to you."

He looked at her tenderly, and taking her hand, said, "Why, Madeleine, you look ill, you must tell me all your troubles, I may be able to assist you ?"

She withdrew her hand quickly, speaking rapidly, "No, no, I am not the one to be thought of ; let us speak of Mademoiselle Marteau. She left Paris, and you have not found her ?"

"How did you discover that?" with great interest.

"Since I have been engaged in this Girard case," she answered, with a deep drawn sigh, "I have become a very able *guide d' instruction*, too able for my own good. A disguise was necessary to accomplish what I had undertaken——"

"And that disguise was that of a fisherlad?"

Madeleine simply inclined her head saying, "being Carnival time, nothing was easier."

"Now I understand Gaston's suspicions," he mused.

"You did very wrong in concealing from Mademoiselle Julie the fact of me visiting you in your office," she exclaimed.

Here she related to him the visit of Floretta to Julie, and finished by adding, "The poor girl's jealousy was excited to the very verge of madness and she fled. You are both the victims of that woman. She is but carrying out a vile plot, to separate you from the woman whom you love."

Maurice listened to every word, and his heart leaped with joy as the hope pressed upon him, that Julie still loved him. Suddenly he thought of the letter he had received, stating that she fled with a lover. He quickly produced it from his pocket, and passing it to Madeleine, said, with an anxiety he could not

conceal, "Read this letter, there is some terrible mystery connected with Julie's disappearance. I have utterly failed to find her, and have concluded to employ detectives to aid me."

Madeleine looked at the letter saying, "This is the work of Floretta. It will not be necessary, however, to employ detectives, Julie is safe and well, at her home with Christine Girard, and her child. You must go to her at once."

Maurice rose quickly exclaiming, "Can it be possible? Ah! my friend, are you sure?" There was no disguising his anxiety.

"I am certain of it, for it was I who brought her back." She also rose continuing, "Ah! Maurice, she is indeed good, and true, worthy of your love, and devotion!"

She suddenly became deathly pale, one hand was clasped tightly over her heart, her eyes closed, the disengaged hand clutched at the air, as if striving to grasp some object for support, she reeled, and would have fallen, had not Maurice sprung to her, and placed her gently in a chair.

He insisted on ringing for Suzanne, but by an heroic effort she recovered herself. "No, no, say no more. I have quite recovered, and in a short time will be myself again. You must go at once, and return here with your

affianced bride." It was a terrible struggle of love and duty that was going on in this proud woman's heart.—That great heart, that was capable of such deep unselfish feeling, seemed to shed its last drop of blood, when she sent the man she loved, to the arms of another.

Maurice took both her hands in his, and said fervently, "What a noble woman you are! A woman whose genius first won, but whose virtues have since commanded my deep admiration, and profound respect."

"A woman you have aided by your good counsel. Ah! my friend, if all men were like you, there would be fewer fallen women." She startled, and shuddered visibly, casting a glance around her, and exclaimed, "But hasten, I know not why, but all day I have been haunted by a vague presentiment of evil. Return here as quickly as possible. I want to hear you say, that I have kept my promise. I want to see you re-united to your beloved, and to hear you both say, 'God bless you, Madeleine de Vallerice.'"

Maurice did not require much urging, he was eager to meet his affianced, and could scarcely believe in the happiness awaiting him. He took the hand held out to him, and bowing kissed it as he exclaimed, "How can I ever thank you, my good friend? I will hasten to Julie, and, as you wish, we will re-

turn." The next moment the door closed behind him.

Madeleine realized that he had left her forever, "Gone! Gone!" she exclaimed, then starting wildly to the door, she threw it open in a perfect frenzy, crying out, "Maurice, Maurice!"

Maurice re-entered the library hurriedly, thinking that something had happened. The unfortunate woman seized his hands impulsively, and with a voice trembling with suppressed emotion, exclaimed, "Ah! Maurice, forgive my weakness; bid me farewell, as if you were never to see me again. Take me to your heart as a sister."

Maurice understood that this woman was sacrificing her love to another, and although he could not love her, he felt a deep sympathy, and compassionate respect for her. He gently pressed the hands that held his own, and bending forward impressed a kiss of reverence upon her broad white brow. Without uttering one word he turned, and left the room.

Finding herself again alone, she clasped her hands to her forehead, exclaiming, "This is the end. Oh! Heaven, what agony, what torture! And now I am utterly exiled by the world. No father! no husband! My dream of love is past, and there is nothing left, not even the soul of an actress."

She fell overcome on the sofa and gave vent to an outburst of weeping, sobbing, and moaning like some poor lost soul. It was the wail of a broken heart ; it was the end of her love. She was exiled from love forever.

After the terrible storm of her grief had ceased, she settled into a calm, but it was like the calm of the mighty ocean, which could at any moment burst forth anew. She lay there for some time, her weary head buried in the cushions. Suddenly she started, some one had hissed the name, "Madeleine!" "Great Heavens," she exclaimed, "it is my husband's voice." She looked around, and was confronted by Gonzago, alias, the Marquis de Alvarez.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

LOVE'S MARTYR.

As Madeleine's eyes met those of her husband, she recoiled with a frightened cry, but quickly recovered herself, and became calmly resigned.

She felt that her duty was done, her promise to Maurice was redeemed, and his happiness assured. She was alone in the world, disgraced as the daughter of a criminal, cruelly deceived by the man who had sworn to cherish, and protect her. She would be ostracized from society, to become a social outcast. All these things flashed through her mind, for the thousandth time, and now should the worst come, she would not flinch.

"Yes, it is I, your husband." His voice, subdued to a whisper, came through his almost set teeth, and sounded more like the hissing of a snake, ready to spring upon its victim. He continued as she remained silent: "I made my escape very early this morning, but as daylight approached, I was obliged to hide; under cover of darkness, I came here

to-night, and saw Maurice de La Tour enter here."

"You are taking desperate chances in coming here; doubtless the house will be well watched. What do you want?"

Gonzago looked about him in fear, as he exclaimed, "Money! You must aid me to escape." Then looking around suspiciously, he asked, "Where has he concealed himself?"

"If Monsieur de La Tour were here, he would not conceal himself, especially from you."

"Where is he?" he demanded.

She answered very calmly, with a shrug of her shoulders, that he had gone out, and she was waiting for him to return.

"You shall not, you shall come with me, and aid me to escape!"

"I do not wish to obey you, I shall remain here."

Her calmness exasperated him and he cried out, "You are waiting for this man because you are his mistress."

"Before Heaven, such an accusation is false, and yet," she added, "I adore him."

Gonzago was surprised at this answer, he expected a denial. "You dare say this to me!"

"Yes, why not?" She rose, and crossed to where he stood looking him straight in the face, as she continued in a deep steady voice

that frightened him, "I dare say anything to you! you, who dare do anything."

"To what does she allude?" was his thought. "How much of his past life did she really know?" His plan was now to appeal to her, to soften her heart toward himself. He exclaimed passionately :

"I love you, Madeleine! I love you with the same passion, the same madness, as on the first day of our marriage."

"A fatal marriage," she replied with a scornful look on her beautiful face. "No doubt your love is the same to-night as on the night when you attempted to murder me; that you did not pierce my heart then is no fault of yours."

"Come, leave this place with me, and forget everything but my mad love for you. I can escape with your help."

His courage was fast deserting him. He fell on his knees before her, and continued, "It was my mad love for you that forced me to break my prison chains to find you."

"No, it was fear of the punishment that you so justly merit, that urged you to seek me." She stood, her head and body proudly erect, surveying him contemptuously, her nostrils quivering with indignation; that this man, who had so humiliated her in the eyes of the world, should dare speak to her of love. She

looked grand in her righteous disdain. "But play the coward till the last," she continued. "It is fitting that you should kneel to talk to me of your love, while I tell you of mine! Listen! Our lives shall never be re-united, I swear it. The very thought of it fills me with horror, the recollection of it kills me. I have discovered your true nature, and your crimes, the thought that you are my husband, is living torture to me!"

He bounded to his feet, and grasping her rudely by the wrist, exclaimed, "You she-devil, I will kill you!"

She threw her arms and head back, and looking him in the eyes, cried out, "Strike, I am ready now, kill me!" As he stood gazing at her, she continued, "Oh! I am weary of life, and wish to die."

There was a mournful pathos in her voice, that carried the conviction of her words. As if by sudden thought, Gonzago dropped the wrist he held, and striking her rudely aside, started for the door, at the same time exclaiming, "No, it is not you that I will kill, it is this de La Tour."

With one bound Madeleine reached the door, and stood with her back against it. "You shall not leave this room!" She was not frightened for her own life, she feared that Maurice might return at any moment, and

that the treacherous Spaniard would take him unawares, as was his custom.

He seized her lithe figure in his fiendish grasp, and dashed her with force to one side, "As there is a Heaven above us, I will find that man, and kill him!"

She did not seem to feel his brutal treatment, but bravely confronted him, saying, "Then as there is a Heaven above us, if you attempt to cross that threshold, you will be arrested as the accomplice of the murderer of Captain Marteau."

He bounded from the door like a shot, exclaiming, "It is false!"

"It is true," following after him. "When I promised to assist Maurice de La Tour, in proving the innocence of Paul Girard, I little dreamed of the horrible discovery I was about to make, that the murderer, Chopard, was—Oh! Great God!" she cried in anguish, "was my father! Do you hear, my father? And that you, my husband, was his accomplice! Upon seeing the portrait of Paul Girard, I recognized you in your disguise! Everything was revealed to me, and I found myself, the wife of one villain, and the daughter of the other."

She gave vent to a wild burst of grief, and fell prostrate on the sofa.

He listened without power to speak, trem-

bling in every limb, and supporting himself against the back of an armchair. It may seem strange, more at this moment than at any other, that all the love he had ever felt for this woman now returned.

The only remorse that wicked heart had ever known was now, and his love for Madeleine was paramount, even in the face of his own great danger. That love remained with him, even when mighty oceans rolled between them in the years that were to follow. It did not linger as a blessing, however, but, as his greatest source of punishment. "Truly the way of Providence is strange."

He approached the sofa, and with genuine emotion in his voice, and even something like moisture in his wicked black eyes, he exclaimed, "Oh! Madeleine, my wife, I thought I had grown to hate you, but at sight of your beautiful, suffering face, all the old love returns, I implore you to love me."

He was about to clasp her in his arms. Quick as a flash, she darted from him, shuddering, "Ugh, you inspire me with hatred and loathing."

"It was for your sake that your father became a criminal," he continued. "It is your duty to protect him. You dare not denounce him, do you understand?"

"Aye! I understand," she replied bitterly.

"It was because of his great love for me, that he robbed, that he murdered, and I ought to thank and bless him for it!"

"Yes, it was to enrich you, and it is not in human nature, for a daughter to bring a father to the scaffold!"

"Yes, that is your creed," she said sorrowfully; "that all means, however dishonest which acquire wealth, luxury, and position, are justifiable, and nothing more is necessary. But no!" she added with spirit, "there is something more, there is self-respect, there is affection, there is truth. Merciful God! this is the work of my father!"

"Madeleine, I—" She turned quickly upon him cutting short whatever he might say. "You are a coward! An innocent man suffers in your place, and you never raised a hand to save him." Throwing herself into an arm-chair, she continued, "If I could forget your crimes, I could never forget your infamy!"

"You reproach me for not denouncing myself, if I had, should I not have been separated from you? I could not give you up!"

"Paul Girard had a wife and child, whom he loved, they tore him from them! His little child, the only ray of sunshine left to his poor suffering wife, was snatched from her arms by the plottings of your notorious partner in crime. Why inflict upon them, the suffering

you could not endure? Why should he suffer the punishment, you had not the courage to face?"

At her allusion to Floretta, the face of Gonzago immediately clouded. During his confinement he had time to think, and had learned to despise the woman, who tried to cultivate all that was evil in his nature. Left to himself, he had plenty of time to compare that vicious woman to the one he had wronged.

He was also jealous of his wife's defense of Paul Girard, knowing himself to be the guilty one, and the words cut deep, the spirit of retaliation rose within him. He approached Madeleine in a threatening manner, and exclaimed insultingly:

"This convict! You pretend to pity him, but it is only because he is the protégé of your lover."

She rose defiantly. "Yes, and it is for love of him, and the sake of truth, and justice, that I will bring him back from exile, and send you there in his place."

He was now thoroughly frightened. "What have you done?" he exclaimed excitedly.

"I have tried to right the wrong, for which I, innocently, have been the cause. Paul Girard has suffered enough, it is your turn now." Madeleine, who was not afraid to die, and who had even courted death at the hands

of her husband, was but human, and when he seized her with the ferocity of a wild beast, she broke from him. It was the touch of his hand that terrified her. She would not have fled from the keen sharp point of the stiletto.

As she broke from his grasp, she started for the door, in her mad haste she stumbled near the sofa. Gonzago had her again in his iron grip, and forcing her rudely against the sofa, he hissed in her face, "Tell me, wretch, have you told them?"

"Yes," she cried out desperately, "ere this they know all, everything!"

His hands clasped her throat, his fingers tightened spasmodically. Her body became limp, her lips parted, her eyes seemed to start from their sockets; her face lost all expression, and was o'erspread with a deathly hue.

The face that was so close to his, now as he bent over her, frightened him, he relaxed his fingers, and whispered passionately, "Madeleine!" The tone of his voice terrified him. He raised her to a more comfortable position, and tore open her dress, baring her bosom in hopes of restoring her back to life.

"My God!" he cried, "she is dead, I've killed her!"

He started back in horror, but the great eyes seemed to follow him at each step, he dared not turn. He bent over her again, im-

ploring her to speak to him. Suddenly a voice reached his ears from the corridor.

“Madeleine, my child, where are you?”

“My God! it is Chopard,” he cried in terror, and the next moment Chopard burst into the room.

CHAPTER XL.

ASHES OF LOVE.

CHOPARD, upon entering the library, and beholding the trembling form of Gonzago, knew that all was not right.

"Where is Madeleine, my child?" he cried to the terror stricken wretch, at the same time glancing hurriedly around, and calling her. Suddenly he started to the sofa, tore off the cushions, which Gonzago had hastily placed over her face. Seeing her in the condition already described, he exclaimed, "My child!" then staggering back, "my God! you have murdered her! Traitor!" He shrieked these words as he sprang upon Gonzago, who had fallen upon his knees.

Chopard had changed much since we last saw him on board the *Floating Tiger*. His form was much thinner, his black hair was heavily streaked with gray, and the face, still devoid of beard, was pale and careworn, denoting hardships and great mental strain; but the small gray eyes were as keen as formerly, and his step as light.

Gonzago shrank trembling in every limb,

crying out, "Mercy! Mercy!" as he felt the fingers of the infuriated man upon his throat.

"Yes, the mercy you have shown to my child! Wretch! How have you kept the sacred trust reposed in you? Liar! Perjurer!"

At this moment M. Gaston and his trusty Partout appeared within the room, accompanied by armed policemen. Behind them was Maurice with a look of anxiety upon his handsome face, and close by his side was his sweetheart, Julie Marteau, with Christine Girard, and little Marie.

When the child heard that Julie was going to the Château, she pleaded to be brought to see the beautiful lady, who had given her back her dear mamma and her dear sister Julie. The carriage containing the four drove up just in time to see Gaston enter with the policemen, and fearing that something unusual had occurred, lost no time in gaining an entrance, where they met Suzanne wringing her hands in despair. "Something has happened to my beloved mistress," was all she could articulate.

Gaston upon entering the room took in the situation at a glance, and gave the order to "Seize that man," indicating Gonzago who had been tracked to the Château.

His astonishment was great when he recognized Chopard. They had expected to find Gonzago, but did not dream of ever again

coming in contact with Chopard, in fact the astonishment of all can be better imagined than described.

Chopard relaxed his hold upon Gonzago, and turning to Gaston exclaimed : " Fear not, Monsieur Gaston, I will not kill him, had I wished to, you could not save him, even now."

Julie, seeing Madeleine on the sofa, and fearing that she was ill, hastened to her, only to start back in horror, " Madeleine de Vallerice is dead," she cried, and all re-echoed her exclamation as in one voice, " Dead !!"

" Yes, dead," almost shrieked Chopard, " murdered by that traitor, her husband."

" Why are you here?" asked Gaston.

" Justice, Monsieur," he replied, with nothing of the old bravado in his manner : " It was with the aid of this traitor, that I murdered Captain Marteau on the Boulevard Bessières and an innocent man has been paying the penalty of his crime."

" You refer to Paul Girard?"

Christine was busy trying to console her child, who had knelt beside the prostrate form of Madeleine, and crying as if her little heart would break. At the mention of her husband's name, she cried out : " Speak ! for Heaven sake, man, speak ! say he is innocent !"

" He is innocent, he is here." Raising his voice he called Paul Girard, and instantly

Girard crossed the threshold, and was within the room.

In an instant husband, wife, and child were locked in a fond embrace, with tears of joy, and thanksgiving. It was truly the happiest moment of their lives, and well repaid for the bitter sorrows they had undergone.

Gonzago could not remove his eyes from the face of Madeleine. At last he gained courage to speak, but his voice seemed strangely unnatural, as he said to Gaston: "Take me away! take me away!"

Gaston gave orders to a couple of policemen who approached Gonzago, and while they were placing the handcuffs upon his wrists, Chopard turned to Gaston and said:

"It was I who gave this man his wealth, and title, but with a breath I demolish them all! Ah! fear not, Monsieur, I would rather let him live to endure the hell on earth of penal servitude, of eternal slavery, until his hair grows white in degradation. Let the recollection of my dead child be a daily terror to him, let him forever behold the eyes of his victim piercing into his very soul."

Gonzago could contain himself no longer, and cried out, "Take me away! for mercy sake, take me away!"

At a signal from Gaston, the two policemen laid their hands upon Gonzago's shoulders,

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.. God forgive me for the past. if only for the love I bore my child ! ..

and between them he was taken back to the prison from which he had escaped.

"Girard, I told you that you would see your wife and child again, I have kept my word. Now I am done with crime ! done with prison ! done with life ! My Madeleine, my darling child, is dead !" At this all exclaimed in astonishment. Chopard crossed to the sofa, and throwing himself upon his knees, burst into a paroxysm of weeping, such as is seldom witnessed, "Dead ! Dead !" he sobbed, "I was too late to save her. My child ! My child ! Too late ! Too late !"

His grief was so intense that all present were moved to tears, even Gaston looked on in silent awe.

The unfortunate man stroked the fair hair, and hands, which were bathed with his tears, as he pressed them again and again to his lips. He murmured to himself when he had grown more calm, "I feel that I cannot live, now that my child is no more." He rose from his knees, and brushing back the golden curls from her broad brow, imprinted a last kiss. "I feel that my time has come to die, God forgive me for the past, if only for the love I bore my child."

He turned to Gaston, and in a broken voice said, "Now, Monsieur, I am ready ; do what you will with me." Gaston again signaled, and

Chopard was taken into custody for the last time. As soon as he had departed, Gaston turned to Maurice, and inquired, "What did he mean by calling Madeleine de Vallerice his child?"

"She is his daughter, Monsieur, I have papers given me by her this very night, and also conclusive proofs of the complete vindication of Paul Girard."

"At last! At last!" exclaimed Paul, and turning to Maurice, he said, "Thank you, Monsieur, thank you!"

"This is all her good work," exclaimed Christine. "She restored to me our child, and saved my life, would that I could save hers now!"

Paul took leave of wife and child, for he was compelled to remain in custody, until certain necessary requirements had been complied with. Even though he was innocent beyond the shadow of a doubt, one cannot leave the custody of the law, as easily as quitting an inn. There are certain formalities that must be observed, but he was happy, and that night, although passed in a prison, was one of the happiest of his life, for he knew that on the morrow, the sun would shine more brightly than ever. It was but the dark night preceding a bright day, the dawn of a new life, a free man, his innocence proclaimed to the world.

The resignation, and faith he had placed in his Heavenly Father, when he parted with his loved ones a few months previous, a condemned criminal, was not misplaced: truly "He heedeth even the fall of the sparrow."

Partout had accompanied the policemen, and after a few words with Maurice, Gaston departed. There were sad offices to fulfill in the house of mourning, and Maurice had promised to attend to them all.

Julie Marteau had taken her place by the side of Madeleine, and had not relaxed her vigil except during the time that Chopard had approached, then she instinctively shrank away.

As soon as possible, she was again at her post, beside the woman who had so fully won her love and confidence. She had kept up a continued patting of the hands, and over the heart. She could not believe, in spite of appearances that this noble heart had ceased to throb forever. "No, it was too cruel, too unjust," she thought to herself; "she must live, that I may prove my appreciation and gratitude." While Julie was trying to produce a reaction of the heart, the child was patting the cold hands, and gently murmuring sweet words of innocent affection.

Suddenly a short quick cry escaped the lips of Julie. Maurice was by her side instantly,

"Look! Look, Maurice! She is not dead! She breathes! She lives!"

The eyelids of Madeleine trembled visibly, then closed. The thin nostrils dilated, and a long breath was inhaled, to be quickly emitted again, forming itself into a deep drawn sigh. The lovely mouth closed, the color had already begun to suffuse her whole neck, and face, that had but a few moments before given every evidence of death, and now gave unmistakable signs of life. The usual restoratives were administered, and Madeleine relapsed into a gentle natural sleep. Christine, who was an experienced nurse, was satisfied by the action of her heart, that it was a case of suspended animation, superinduced by strangulation. There were fervent thanksgivings from the few staunch friends that surrounded the peaceful sleeper, who was not doomed to die by the hands of an assassin.

She slumbered for an hour or more, then awoke gradually, realizing that something had happened. Julie immediately assisted her. Her eyes first rested upon Maurice. "Ah! Maurice, you are here, and Julie also?" Then with a faint, sad smile, she continued as if trying to think, "I remember, I was waiting here for you and I must have fallen asleep!" She shuddered, "Oh! I've had such a fearful dream!" She covered her face, as if to shut out the picture that arose before her.

Maurice quickly glanced at Julie, and placing his finger upon his lips, as a signal not to repeat what had transpired, he turned to Madeleine, and said in a buoyant manner :

"Yes, Madeleine, it was all a dream, and you must forget it. You see we have returned to say, 'God bless you, Madeleine de Vallerice, you have kept your promise.'"

"What happiness to me to hear you say these words!" She totteringly rose to her feet by a supreme effort, and with a forced smile, continued, "they are the only comfort, the only ray of sunshine, through the bitter sorrows of my life! You are both happy, very happy?"

The young girl threw her arms around Madeleine, and kissing her impulsively repeated, "Oh! yes, very, very happy."

Madeleine gently returned the embrace and while her arms were about the slender form, she extended her right hand to Maurice. He took it without a word, and bending his head, fervently impressed a kiss upon it. For a moment a faint dizziness seized her, she withdrew the hand, and immediately turned to Julie saying, "Take her, Maurice, love her, until death do you part!"

Maurice, in his great happiness, could not realize the depth of Madeleine's anguish, as she placed the precious gift in his arms. She

turned, and placed her hand over her heart, as if to still its wild throbs of pain. She did not cry out, but with a calm, sad resignation buried forever the ashes of love! She turned and gently said, "Now leave me, friends, I will see you all to-morrow."

With an affectionate good-night from Julie, and a promise to call early in the morning, she joined Maurice in the outer hall where he was awaiting her.

After Madeleine had revived from her comatose condition, and was sleeping, little Marie, who was in her mother's arms, became weary of watching, and soon fell into the sound sleep of childhood, from which she had to be aroused.

Madeleine had fallen wearily into an arm-chair. She was alone,—what had she now to live for? Christine did not wish to interrupt her, thinking it better to steal gently away, and leave her to the care of Suzanne, but the child would not leave, she kept pulling her, to lead her to where Madeleine sat, lost in her own sad thoughts. Finally quitting her mother, who was anxious to join the others, she stepped gently towards the chair where Madeleine sat, then stealing timidly to her side, she said, with the sweetness of a child, but the soul of a woman, "I love you, Mademoiselle, because you gave me back my dear



"Heaven has given me its blessing in the pure love of a child!"

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mamma and my dear papa, won't you let me kiss you before I go?"

The sweet voice of the little child fell upon the lonely woman like magic. She was aroused from the sad lethargy, into which she had relapsed; falling upon her knees, she clasped the child to her aching heart. "Darling!" she cried aloud as she kissed the sweet upturned face. Then raising her dark eyes so full of soul, as if in prayer: "Heaven, that denies me the love of a mother, of a father, and that of a husband, has perhaps given me its blessing in the pure love of a child."

Destroy the love in a woman's life, what is there worth the living? It is her nature to love, and to be loved in return. Madeleine was a woman of strong impulse, with her, love was life. The fire of love for man extinguished, was rekindled for the child!

Oh! pitying Father from Thy home on high,
Sometimes Thou send'st a ministering angel here
To rest awhile, teaching us we are nigh
The Angel's home, not too far off to never hear
An answering voice from out the sky,
When in despair we lift our hearts to Thee
And cry, "Oh! God! why hast Thou forsaken me?"
We watch and wait.

CHAPTER XLI.

RESTITUTION.

CHOPARD has been taken to the Conciergerie, and assigned to the condemned quarters, for we must not lose sight of the fact, that he would now appear merely as a witness. It was not he who was to undergo a second trial, but Gonzago, his real accomplice.

It will also be remembered that when M. Gaston left the Château de Alvarez, Madeleine had not yet revived.

He immediately proceeded to the Conciergerie where he met Partout, who had just registered the re-capture of Gonzago, with a charge of murder added to his already long list of crimes. The curiosity of both men was greatly excited, and Gaston determined to visit Chopard, and obtain from him some details connected with his escape, and his denunciation of Gonzago.

"Well," he remarked on entering the prisoner's cell. "You are back again in your old quarters?"

"I am glad you have come, Monsieur Gaston," was the response. "The confession

which you tried so hard to exact from me before, and in which you failed, I will now freely give you. There is nothing now that I care to conceal."

"I am anxious to know first how you managed to escape, and return to Paris?" was the first question asked by Gaston.

With marked politeness, Chopard offered the two small benches in his cell to Gaston, and his companion, then seating himself upon the foot of the bed, he narrated his escape with Girard, their desperate leap overboard, and the final destruction of the ship by a thunderbolt.

After floating about on the spar until daylight, they discovered themselves a short distance from Teneriffe. By a final effort, they swam to the shore, where they were well received by the inhabitants, and given food, shelter, and clothing.

They foresaw the result of remaining on the Island; being convicts it was only a matter of time, when they would be turned over to the first ship bound for New Caledonia.

Between them they contrived to secure a boat, and provisions enough to last them some days, and made their escape at night, soon reaching the open sea. Days were passed in terrific peril, with starvation threatening them when they were at last picked up by a passing

steamer. In this way they reached Europe, and finally Paris.

He then continued with his gruesome story, omitting no detail connected with the crime, and explained the part Gonzago had played in the affair, exaggerating nothing but confining himself strictly to the truth. He disclosed the plan he had formed, explaining not only the crime, but the motive that had led to it. He also enlightened them in regard to Gonzago's antecedents.

He wished to impress upon them the fact, that his daughter was in no way implicated and was as guiltless of the whole affair as Paul Girard, whose innocence he loudly proclaimed. It was only by a great effort of will, that he succeeded in suppressing his emotion, and maintaining his composure throughout the entire interview, especially when he was obliged to speak of his daughter.

He rose, and took two or three steps in the narrow cell, at the same time declaring, in a voice that trembled with suppressed emotion, "I no longer have any secrets, I am now indifferent to everything, and to everybody. One person alone interested me, and she is no more. What is life to me without her?"

He had evidently told all, for he again seated himself upon the foot of the bed, and without paying any more attention to his visitors, sank into a sad and gloomy reverie,

Gaston and his associate respected his profound dejection, and quietly passed out of the cell, the heavy iron door swinging into place behind them.

The two men were so wrapped in the story they had just heard, and the great change that had taken place in the cunning criminal of a few months previous, that neither spoke. They were about to pass out of the building, when they were met by Maurice, who, after leaving the ladies at their home, hastened to the office of Gaston. Not finding him, he bethought himself of calling at the Conciergerie before repairing to his home, in search of him. He was anxious to communicate what had transpired, after their departure from the Château de Alvarez. Gaston, hardened as he was, felt something like a tinge of remorse, when he found that Madeleine was unconscious of any knowledge of the affair of which he had accused her, and he secretly rejoiced, when he heard that she had recovered. It was now very late, or more correctly speaking, very early in the morning, as it was long past midnight, and each repaired to his respective home.

The following morning Gaston was unusually early at his office, and was soon joined by Maurice, where, in strict privacy, they opened the package given to Maurice the night before by Madeleine. The papers contained a writ-

ten statement of all that she had discovered, together with, as she stated, a history of her life, which tallied with what Chopard had said, and was most blameless.

Among the papers was a large envelope addressed to Mademoiselle Julie Marteau. After some little consultation, it was decided to open it, which they did. It contained bank notes to the amount of five hundred thousand francs, accompanied by a note which stated, "Restitution of the fatal legacy, the cause of my poor father's crime, for which I, innocently, was the incentive."

This caused no little astonishment. We will here state, that some of these bills were taken by Madeleine from the secret drawer of Gonzago, the deficiency being made up from her own money.

The two men had about finished their investigation, when a hurried messenger arrived with the startling news, "Chopard is dead!"

The guard had found him sitting upon the foot of the bed, his head dropped upon his chest. Thinking he was sleeping, they first called, then tried to arouse him, but to no avail. Just where Gaston and Partout had left him, in the solitude of his lonely cell, he had died alone.

His last thoughts were doubtless to meet his beloved child, whom he believed had gone



before. This man who thought so little of crime, and was deaf to the sorrows of others had run his race. His heartstrings had burst, and he welcomed death. But even in Eternity, he was doomed to disappointment, for his child was not there to greet him.

Dear reader, remember his parting words by the side of his daughter, "May God forgive me for the past, if only for the love I bore my child!" "He" will forgive without doubt, when the many sins have been expiated. Our Lord said to Magdalen, "Many sins are forgiven thee, because thou didst love much!" "He," who knows all hearts best, is merciful, close the book upon his faults, if only for the sake of his child.

Maurice hastened as quickly as possible to Julie, and together they went to Madeleine, who was as yet ignorant of her father's escape. She remembered the terrible scene with her husband, and his attempts to murder her, but what transpired during her collapse, she was not aware of, as Maurice had cautioned Suzanne, and all the servants to silence.

They found her white as a lily, with dark circles under her eyes, and unmistakable signs of suffering. Her movements also were feeble, and languid, contrasting with those of Julie, who was happy, now that Maurice was by her side never more to part.

Julie regretted to be obliged to inflict more sorrow upon Madeleine, but Maurice had explained, "better that they should break the news to her, as all Paris was ringing with the sensation, and it would be impossible to withhold it from her.

Gently, very gently they told her the scene of the preceding night. She could scarcely realize at first. She was very calm, her head was thrown back, resting against the high chair in which she sat. Her eyes closed dreamily, and she spoke more to herself, or like one in a trance :

"I now seem to remember, what before I could not comprehend. After retiring last night, I tossed about I know not how long, it seemed to me an age. I fell into the sleep of exhaustion ; I dreamed of my poor erring father, I saw him alone, in a prison cell, sitting upon a small bed. Suddenly he raised his head, which had been bent, as if in grief. Oh ! how changed he was ! I scarcely knew him, he extended his arms, and drew me close to him in a fond embrace, speaking in the most endearing terms. 'My child ! My darling Madeleine, image of your sainted mother !' His voice was strangely soft, and sweet, great tears were rolling down his beardless face. It all seemed very strange, for he was never accustomed to show me much affection, and I

feared, rather than loved him. It was all changed now, and I loved him very dearly, and tried to console him." She raised her hand as if to suit the action to the words as she continued, "He stroked back my hair, kissed me again and again, repeating, 'Oh! my child, you have forgiven your poor unhappy father! Your mother will have a welcome for me. She was the only being who ever loved me, I never knew happiness before, my child, these are the first tears of joy I ever shed.'"

The tears that were gathering upon the long lashes, now coursed each other down her pale cheek, glistening like drops of dew upon the fair white lily.

She did not try to stay their flow, as her voice melted away in a tremulous soulful whisper.

Maurice and Julie remained silent, too deeply impressed to utter one word. The most difficult part was yet to be performed, but Julie, true woman as she was, found herself equal to the task. She crossed to Madeleine, and lifting the soft lace handkerchief that lay in her lap, gently wiped the tears away, saying tenderly:

"My dearest friend, you must bear up and be brave, Are you strong enough to hear what I have to tell you?"

Madeleine raised her great soulful eyes, and replied with a melancholy smile, "Ah! my dear Julie, there is nothing more that I can suffer. My measure of sorrow is over full; I bow with grace to the inevitable."

Maurice felt a deep sympathy for this woman, whose life was so full of sadness, and whose heart had been laid bare to him alone. What wonder that he turned aside to hide the tears he found it hard to repress.

Julie bent and gently kissing her friend said, with all the courage she could command, "My dear Madeleine, your father is no more; he passed away very early this morning."

Madeleine startled, her hand pressed tightly over her heart. It seemed for a moment as if she would swoon. She slowly recovered herself murmuring, "Dead!" and by a strange coincident, repeated the identical words her father had used, "Done with crime! Done with prisons! Done with life!" Then clasping her hands as if in prayer, and raising her eyes to Heaven she said, fervently, "Thank God! his sufferings upon earth are now ended! Henceforth I will devote my life to self abnegation, poverty, and charity, and by fervent prayers and actions, try to expiate the sins of my poor erring father, God forgive him!" She turned to Julie, and impulsively caught her hands, "Now that he has gone

before the great Judge, you will forgive him, will you not?"

This look of anguish and appeal, the young girl could not resist. "Yes, Madeleine, I freely forgive him for your sake."

"Thank you, my friend," she cried out between her sobs, "God bless you!"

By permission from Madeleine, the remains of Chopard were taken in charge by Maurice. Three persons followed the remains of the man who had come back to the scene of his crime, to find a last resting place.

They were Madeleine, Maurice and Julie, who insisted upon remaining by the side of her friend. It was with true Christian resignation, that the daughter of the victim, placed with her own small hands, the flowers upon the lonely mound, and soothed with loving tender words the daughter, for whom the hard heart had at last broken.

The press in every part of the country demanded a revision of Paul Girard's trial, based upon certain articles in the code of criminal procedure. Those who were clamoring for his conviction, were now loud in their cries that justice should be done.

The masses were exasperated on account of the sympathy for him, the consequence being that in a very short time he was released from custody, a free man, his innocence fully proclaimed to the world.

The investigation in the case of Floretta Castro and Gonzago progressed so rapidly, that before the expiration of six weeks the woman was transported for twenty years to La Guyanne, while Gonzago, who made no attempt whatever to defend himself, went on his way to New Caledonia, where he was sent to hard labor for the remainder of his life. Society could not forgive this man for having fraudulently introduced himself into its *salons*. They blamed him for all the suffering undergone by Girard, and his innocence made the culprit's guilt appear more hideous.

It is now some years since Gonzago was transported. Since that lapse of time one could never recognize the handsome Spaniard, in the poor miserable trembling wretch. His curly hair, once so black, is now cut short, and looks like a white skull cap, drawn tightly over his head, which makes his dark skin now exposed to all weather, appear like parchment.

Although he knew that Madeleine had recovered from his brutal treatment, it brought him no peace of mind, for her eyes, as he had seen them last, still haunted him, and strange to say the mad flame of love that kindled in his heart on that fatal night, raged into a wild conflagration, that seemed to burn into his very soul. The thought that she still lived, and might be possessed by another, was tor-

ture to him, causing a continual conflict between the jealousy he felt for his wronged wife, and the hate he now felt for Floretta, who had cultivated all that was evil in his nature, which predominated over the good.

There is little more to tell in this story of human hearts. In a short time there was a quiet wedding, and a happier couple do not exist than Maurice, and his sweet wife, Julie. One lovely child blessed their union, they have called her Madeleine.

Madeleine de Vallerice gave up the Château, and has long since dropped the title of Marquise de Alvarez. Many of her old friends and admirers did not forsake her in her great trials. From those whose hearts she had won, came loving words of sympathy, but the old life had no charms for her. She did not enter a convent, however, she knew, that in this beautiful world of ours, there was plenty of work to be done. The love rekindled in her heart for the convict's child was her only comfort and solace, and to her education and welfare, she devoted all her energies. She still lives quietly in Paris, honored and respected by all who knew her, but she mingles not with them, realizing the sad fact, that through the sins of others, she is, EXILED BY THE WORLD.

Renounce forever every blissful dream
It doth but mock thee and thy grasping fail ;
Know that however bright the future gleam,
Each earthly vision turns to mirage pale.
The Battlefield will soon to glory turn,
The tempest lull thee to a soft repose,
The struggle be a lesson bright to learn ;
And thy life but a peaceful book to close.
The veil before thy sight then rent in twain,
Thou shalt not call from out the clouds in vain.

Father, is not the battle well nigh fought,
Spirits of longings crushed are moaning at the door ;
Will peace not come although so dearly bought,
After the years of conflict gone before ?
Dead hopes, dead joys are strewn along my path,
Laughter that died upon the lips, smiles buried at their
birth.

Yielding but woeful sighs for aftermath.
Sad lips refuse to moan, yet have forgotten mirth,
Eyelids with hot and bitter tears are wet
Still doth the Father say, " Not Yet ! Not Yet ! "

THE END.



